THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

SAINT AUGUSTINE

SERMONS ON THE LITURGICAL SEASONS

Translated by Sister Mary Sarah Muldowney, R.S.M.

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A NEW TRANSLATION

VOLUME 38

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Translated by

SISTER MARY SARAH MULDOWNEY, R. S. M.

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INTRODUCTION

The Sermons of St. Augustine which, as a group, are here published in English translation for the first time in this country were delivered on the various feasts and seasons of the liturgical year. They include twelve discourses for the feast of Christmas, two for New Year's Day, six for the Epiphany, fourteen for Lent, five for the Vigil of Easter, five for Easter Sunday, thirty for the Easter season, and five for Ascension Thursday. In the translation an attempt has been made to adhere, as closely as seemed feasible, to the style of St. Augustine, repetitious though it is, since to do otherwise would inevitably detract from the simplicity and directness which constitute the singular charm of his discourse.

These *Sermones de tempore* constitute one part of the monumental collection of the preaching of St. Augustine as published by the Benedictines of St. Maur in 1683 and as subsequently compiled by P. Migne in the *Patrologia Latina*. There we find a corpus of about 400 sermons, including 83 on various passages of the Old Testament, 88 on the great liturgical feasts of the year, 69 on the festivals of the saints, 23 on a variety of subjects and 31 of doubtful authenticity. To this number may be added the sermons in explanation of the psalms and of the Gospel and Epistles of St. John which are often designated as tracts, as well as a small num-

ber of others distributed through the corpus. In addition, 313 sermons are classified as spurious.[1] Nevertheless, though grounded on the first printed edition compiled by Augustinus Dodo in 1495 and enlarged by supplementary material furnished by Vlimmerius (1564), J. Sirmondus (1631), J. Vignier (1654), and though revised with great discrimination by the monks of St. Maur, this Benedictine edition was far from definitive.[2]

Since the publication of Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, various libraries have contributed over 600 additional manuscript sermons attributed, on tenable or untenable grounds, to St. Augustine. In 1792, for example, M. Denis discovered a twelfth-century manuscript of San Severino, Naples, containing 57 sermons, two dozen of which are recognized as reliable, hitherto-unpublished sermons of St. Augustine. On the other hand, in the collection of 200 or more sermons discovered and published by A. B. Caillou (1836-1842) and of a like number brought to light by Cardinal Angelo Mai (1852), few sermons appear to be authentic. However, a truly valuable find of a Carolingian manuscript from the Wolfenbüttel Library, made by Dom Germain Morin in 1913, supplied 40 new Augustinian sermons. Such discoveries not only furnish us with new sermons, but also lead to emendations of texts previously published. The task of building up a complete collection of the sermons is a tremendous one and will be accomplished only when all existing manuscripts of St. Augustine's sermons have been discovered, inspected, and criticized.

The existence of hundreds of sermons spuriously designated as Augustinian is not surprising. In the first place, the actual number of St. Augustine's sermons must have exceeded

1 See R. J. Deferrari, 'St. Augustine's Method of Composing and Delivering Sermons,' *AJP* 43 (1922) 98; D. J. Kavanagh, *Commentary on the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* (Fathers of the Church 11) 14.

2 See A. Wilmart, 'Easter Sermons of St. Augustine,' *Journal of Theological Studies,* 28 (1927-1928) 113-116.

even the combined total of genuine and spurious discourses attributed to him. From the time of his ordination to the priesthood when, contrary to the practice of the period whereby bishops alone enjoyed the privilege of preaching, he was directed to assume this duty because of Bishop Valerius' unfamiliarity with the Latin tongue to his death,[3] he preached regularly on Sundays and on all special feasts. Instances of sermons on five successive days, and on three successive days,[4] besides numerous references to discourses on two consecutive days may be cited. Forty years of preaching even at the rate of two sermons a week would entail more than 4,000 sermons. Furthermore, we know that he often preached in churches outside his episcopal see, in Carthage, Bulla Regia, Utica, and elsewhere, since Possidius, his biographer, says: 'Besides, as a bishop, with a zeal and fervor the greater in proportion as his authority was ampler, he preached the word of eternal salvation enthusiastically and skillfully, not only in one region but wherever, on invitation, he had come, at that time when the Church of the Lord was developing and growing. He was always ready to furnish, to those requesting it, an explanation of the faith and hope which is directed to God.'[5] In the second place, St. Augustine's sermons formed, throughout the Middle Ages, 'the reservoir which fed richly for a thousand years the piety and preaching of priest and monk and saint.'[6] The sermon collections of the Middle Ages are constantly revealing sermons attributed to St. Augustine,[7] so close to his in style and content that it will require rigorous examination to sift the

3 See Possidius, *Aurelii Augustini Vita* 5; also, St. Augustine, *Epistulae* 21.

4 See St. Augustine, *Sermons* 153-156; *Tractatus in Joannis Evangelium*, 19-23; *Sermons* 320-322.

5 Possidius, *op. cit.* 9; cf. D. C. Lambot, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Sermones selecti duodeviginti* (Brussels 1950) 5.

6 T. Shahan, 'St. Augustine of Hippo—Educator of Christian Europe,' *Catholic World* (1930) 580.

7 G. Bardy, *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* 12 (Paris 1950) 52.

authentic from the imitations in this mass of material, a task in which Dom Morin has rendered invaluable service as evidenced by the collection published in *Miscellanea Agostiniana* (Rome 1930). He has also given the world 51 newly discovered sermons, 34 of which were published in Munich (1917) and 17 of which have appeared at intervals in the *Revue Bénédictine.*

With the exception of these fruitful labors of Dom Morin in which he has been ably seconded by de Bruyne, Wilmart, and Lambot,[8] scholars have not generally held the sermons in such high esteem as the other portions of St. Augustine's literary achievement. Possibly the author himself is responsible for this depreciation by reason of his personal dissatisfaction with his sermons: 'Indeed, in my case, too, my own discourse nearly always displeases me. For I am covetous of something better, which I frequently enjoy inwardly before I begin to express it in intelligible words; and then, when my capacities of expression prove inferior to my inner apprehensions, I grieve over the failure which my tongue has manifested in co-operating with my heart, for I desire that my auditor should have the same complete understanding of the subject which I myself have.'[9] In his *Retractations,* too, the saint refers to the unrevised character of the sermons: 'When I corrected these ninety-three works which I recall having dictated in 230 books, I published the retraction of these books in two volumes at the earnest request of my brethren, before I began to look over my letters and sermons to the people, the former dictated and the latter spoken.'[10] Possidius also adds that 'he left certain of his books unfinished.'[11]

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8 D. DeBruyne, 'Enarrationes in Psalmos prêchées à Carthage.' *Miscellanea Agostiniana* II 321-325; 'La Chronologie de quelques sermons de S. Augustin,' *Revue Bénédictine* 43 (1931) 185-193; A. Wilmart, *op. cit.* 112-144; D. C. Lambot, *op. cit.,* and articles in *Revue Bénédictine* since 1933.

9 St. Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus* 7.

10 St. Augustine, *Retractationes* 2.93.2.

11 Possidius, *op. cit.* 28.

Adalberto Kunzelmann's dissertation (1928) and his comprehensive study[12] have partially established the chronology of the sermons, so that about two-thirds of them can now be dated with certainty. Monographs on the style and language of the sermons have been printed in the Patristic Studies of the Catholic University of America and in the Nijmegen Patristic Studies; Marie Comeau in several works has treated the exegetical sermons, particularly the Tractates on the Epistle and Gospel of St. John; and in the decade 1930-1940 the *Revue Bénédictine* carried many valuable contributions to the study of these sermons.[13]

St. Augustine's sermons on the Gospel and Epistle of St. John, and those on the psalms and on the saints, the groups used to advantage in the *Breviarium Romanum,* have been translated, but not the *Sermones de tempore.*[14] Yet, these sermons give a valuable insight into Augustinian thought in general and into specific phases of the culture and liturgy of the age which produced them.[15] For example, the Lenten sermons (205-216), stressing the preparation for Easter of all the faithful and, in particular, of the candidates for baptism, give considerable information on the Creed and on the liturgical practices of that season. Likewise, the Easter sermons give detailed expositions of the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist (227.1, 229, 235). Furthermore, in his excoriation of his hearers for placing undue emphasis on gift-giving at the New Year to the exclusion of spiritual practices (198.2), and for engaging in a ceremony which was tantamount to a mockery of baptism (196.4), in his appeal for toleration in place of

12 A. Kunzelmann, 'Die Chronologie der Sermones des hl. Augustinus,' *Miscellanea Agostiniana* II 417-520.

13 M. Comeau, *S. Augustin exegète du quatrième évangile* (Paris 1930); also, 'Sur la transmission des sermons de S. Augustin,' *Revue des Etudes Latines* 10 (1932) 408-422.

14 Eric Pryzwara presents several apt quotations from the *Sermones de tempore* in his *Augustine Synthesis,* but they are fragmentary and isolated.

15 Kunzelmann, 'Augustins Predigttätigkeit,' *Festschrift der Görres-Gesellschaft* (1930) 167.

anti-Semitism (204.3) and for a discountenancing of money-lending at interest, and of astrology (202.2, 238), Augustine gives interesting sidelights on religious and sociological conditions of his day. Valuable information on the Arians, Donatists, Manichaeans, Priscillianists, and other heretics of the fourth and fifth centuries also appear.[16]

In subject matter the *Sermones de tempore,* though celebrating the various seasons of the liturgical year, are always concerned with the revealed word of God. St. Augustine's youthful disdain for what he considered stylistic deficiencies of the Scriptures[17] had delayed his acquaintance with what was later to become the quarry for all his doctrine, but once won over to their study, he seems to have made them part of his own being. He seems to have committed to memory the greater part of the Scriptures, for apt quotations adorn and underscore every paragraph. At times he repeats the Scriptural phrase, as though pondering it, rolling it over, as it were, on his tongue, savoring its sweetness. That this constant recourse to Scripture was deliberate is clear from *De doctrina Christiana* 4.8: 'It is especially necessary for the man who is bound to speak wisely, even though he cannot speak eloquently, to retain in memory the words of Scripture. For, the more he discerns the poverty of his own speech, the more he ought to draw on the riches of the Scripture, so that what he says in his own words he may prove by the words of Scripture and so that he himself, though small and weak in his own discourse, may gain strength and power from the corroborative testimony of great men.'

It is very probable that, in citing Scripture, Augustine did not use St. Jerome's Vulgate version until after the turn of the fifth century. Extremely cautious in regard to the numerous Latin versions current in Africa in his day, he considered the *Itala* as the most faithful of these versions, but

16 See *Sermons* 197, 237, 238, *et passim.*
17 St. Augustine, *Confessions* 3.4-6.

he frequently made his own changes in an effort to approximate the Greek of the Septuagint more closely.[18] This will explain the occasional unfamiliar phrasing of well-known Scriptural passages.[19]

To St. Ambrose, his first teacher in Christian exegesis, Augustine owes the trait which Bardy describes as a 'strange tendency to an allegorical interpretation' of the Scriptures.[20] In his *Confessions* he commends this stylistic device of the Bishop of Milan in the words: When Ambrose 'had removed the mystical veil, he would reveal the spiritual meaning of those passages which seemed to teach falsehood when they were interpreted literally.'[21] He used it frequently throughout his works. In the sermons here translated it is evident in his interpretation of the metaphors whereby the Church is likened to a net cast into the sea, gathering within its folds both the good and the bad (248-250), and again, to a threshing floor whereon the separation of the chaff from the wheat takes place (223, 259). The engrafting of the wild olive upon the olive tree is another image to which he often adverts (218).

Linked with St. Augustine's fondness for allegorical interpretation is his preoccupation with the symbolism of numbers. With an enthusiasm incomprehensible to the modern reader, he expatiates at length on the significance of the 40 days of Lent (205.1, 210.6), the 50 days after Easter (252.11), the 153 fishes (248-250), and similar passages.

Akin to these idiocyncrasies of composition is what we might term his 'tangentialism.' The marvelous breadth of vision whereby he embraced in one glance the theological,

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18 See Kavanagh, *op. cit.* 8; also, St. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 2.15.22, and F. C. Burkitt, 'A Reconstruction of the Old-Latin Text of the Gospels Used by St. Augustine,' *Journal of Theological Studies*, 28 (1927) 101-105.

19 See *Sermons* 251.2, 5, 244 n. 26, 257.

20 Bardy, *op. cit.* 104.

21 St. Augustine, *Confessions* 6.4.6.

philosophical, philological, historical, and sociological implications of the subject in hand made it possible for him to break off repeatedly into tangential topics which he discussed, sometimes at great length, without any irrelevance so far as he was concerned, but with a resultant blurring of the logical sequence of thought so far as the reader is concerned. One unfamiliar with the saint's thought patterns might condemn such passages as destructive of unity, but wider experience with his works enables the reader to discern the superb architectural skill of this master-builder in words.

These peculiarities in composition may have influenced Schmid in his unwarranted criticism of St. Augustine's sermons: 'They are extremely deficient in respect to thoroughness of investigation, appropriateness of illustration, useful treatment of subjects, correct interpretation of the holy Scripture, and an easy, agreeable style and manner of address.'[22] In answer to this criticism, Dr. Deferrari says that such supposed deficiencies may easily be explained by a knowledge of the circumstances under which the homilies of St. Augustine were composed and delivered. In two well-documented discussions[23] it is made clear that the opinion, generally accepted before 1922, that St. Augustine wrote most of his sermons before delivery, that he dictated many to be read thereafter, and that he delivered some extemporaneously was based upon a faulty rendering of the last sentence of the *Retractations*. The passage was corrected by Kröll in Volume 36 of the Vienna Corpus to read 'before I had begun to correct the letters and the sermons to the people, the former [letters] having been dictated by me, the latter [sermons] having been delivered by me,' and thus the cause for misinterpretation was removed.

At the conclusion of a survey of the practice of preachers

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22 Quoted by Deferrari, *loc. cit.* 213.
23 See also Deferrari, 'Verbatim Reports of Saint Augustine's Unwritten Sermons,' *TAPA* 46 35-47.

contemporary or nearly contemporary with St. Augustine, Deferrari states that most of the clerics who acquired a reputation as preachers in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries (such as Origen, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Jerome) delivered their sermons without written assistance of any kind, but after more or less careful consideration of their subject. This fact is evident, not only from various statements made to that effect by St. Augustine in his treatises on preaching,[24] and from excerpts from his sermons, such as (225.3): 'I, who now speak to you, thought out beforehand what I was going to say to you before I came to you. When I thus considered what I was to say to you the speech already existed in my heart,' but also from his manner of delivering his discourses.

The patient repetition of the simplest statements which, to the modern reader accustomed to rigorous pruning of verbosity, seems the ultimate in redundancy, could have resulted only from extemporaneous discourse, and from the constant effort of St. Augustine to gauge the response of his audience to the lesson he was striving to inculcate. A watchful study of his auditors' countenances and reactions resulted in the reiteration of the subject matter, now in the same words, now in another form, again in a sharp interrogation, sometimes even in a fervent prayer. Incidentally, the reader is forced to keep in mind the fact that the usual congregation of the Bishop of Hippo consisted of Christians and heretics, Jew and pagans, and that his repetitious unfolding of truths familiar to us from childhood was an absolute necessity.

The spontaneity of these sermons is noticeable, too, in the various digressions which are interspersed in many of the sermons and which would have been removed or adjusted if the sermons had been written out beforehand. In addition, there are familiar comments which could not have been interpolated in advance, such as St. Augustine's rebuke of those

24 See St. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 4.3, 4, 25; *De catechizandis rudibus* 18.

worshipers who were more eager to depart from than to come to the church, and who begrudged the time which was taken from their feasts (264.1); his sad reference to those who emulated the pagans in their New Year's festivities (198.2); his parenthetical explanations in regard to those to whom he was directing his strictures (264.4); his appeal to those who showed signs of impatience at his oft-repeated disquisition on the symbolism of numbers to bear with him so that others less well instructed than they might receive that information (250.3); and finally, his impetuous, broken sentences, his brief ejaculations, imperatives, and rhetorical questions (e.g., in 185.1, 196.4, 213.1, 224.3)—all of which were indisputable signs of the off-hand nature of his discourse.

Frequent references to the time element, to the necessity of curtailing what he wished to say because of the shortness of the time, is another indication that the sermons were not written out in advance with due consideration of the alloted time, one hour as it appears in the *Catecheses* of St. Cyril of Jerusalem. In spite of the fact that many of the sermons would take less than an hour, and that St. Augustine was ever alert to signs of fatigue on the part of his audience, the reader notes that the saint frequently seemed surprised by the end of the hour and embarrassed by the impossibility of completing what he had in mind.

These indications of the spontaneous character of the discourses of St. Augustine, and, in particular, the familiar conversational passages evoked by some unforeseen occurrence, are ample evidence of the fact that the sermons were, for the most part, extemporaneous. That we possess so many of the homilies today is the result of the custom which prevailed at that time of having *notarii* present, who took down, in a kind of shorthand, notes on the sermons. Deferrari cites abundant evidence to prove that among the Greek and Latin Fathers this was the customary procedure, and he calls attention to the fact that St. Augustine refers to the presence

of such *notarii* at the philosophical dialogues which took place in Cassiciacum and that in one of his letters he quotes from a sermon in which he had said: 'As you perceive, what I say is being taken down by the *notarii* of this church and what you say is likewise being transcribed, so that my sermon and your cries of approval are not falling unheeded to the earth.'[25] Hence, we are indebted to the *notarii* for the preservation of the sermons of St. Augustine, and, since each *notarius* noted what he thought essential to recall, we are likewise indebted to them for some of the inconsistencies and obscurities apparent in the sermons (e.g., 251.4, 211.4).

In spite of patent inaccuracies, lacunae, and repetitions, the sermons constitute 'one of Saint Augustine's most notable services to Christian literature and especially to the literature of the pulpit.'[26] So far as style goes, they are uneven, for variation in quality is almost unavoidable in occasional pieces which depend upon extraneous circumstances equally capable of exalting or of depressing a preacher. Yet, there are moments when vigorous aptness of expression stirred to heights of enthusiasm his congregation of fourth-century Hippo. Their stylistic effectiveness seems to stem from a confluence of three definitely marked streams: the rhetorical tradition of the Second Sophistic, which was deeply imbedded in him by reason of long familiarity with it as a student and as professor of rhetoric; the Scriptural influence, dating, in the first place, from the days when he listened with critical mind to the sermons of St. Ambrose and, second, from the period of seclusion which he extorted from Bishop Valerius after his ordination in which he planned to steep himself in the study of the Old and New Testaments; finally, the colloquial strain which he deliberately affected in an endeavor

25 Deferrari, 'St. Augustine's Method' 107-110, 119-121; cf. St. Augustine, *De ordine* 1.5; *Epistulae* 213.2 (*PL* 33.967).

26 H. J. Rose, 'St. Augustine as a Forerunner of Medieval Hymnology,' *Journal of Theological Studies* 28 (1927) 385.

to carry out the Pauline dictum, '*Omnibus omnia factus sum, ut omnes facerem salvos.*'[27]

The use of rhetorical devices which had become second nature to St. Augustine is evident on every page of the sermons, particularly in the figures of repetition and of sound. Epanaphora and antistrophe, paranomasia and polyptoton, give emphasis and vigor to one passage after another. Clever plays upon words abound, such as '*incredibilem credibilem factam et toto mundo incredibiliter creditam*' (190.2), *and* '*voluntaria copiosi inopia fiat necessaria inopis copia*' (210.10), as well as '*hoc tam grande miraculum malunt illi fictum putare, quam factum*' (184.1). Parachesis, assonance, and alliteration are frequently used to give point and effectiveness to the matter under discussion.[28]

Scriptural influence is noticeable in St. Augustine's constant recourse to parallelism and antithesis, the dominant characteristics of Hebrew poetry.[29] It is evident, too, in the plentiful use of metaphors and similes drawn from the immediate surroundings of his auditors, the fields, the sea, the firmament, as were those of our Lord. The classical background, his heritage as a professor of rhetoric, which was so rich in source material for such imagery, appears but rarely (197.1,6; 241.5).

Finally, in the stylistic pattern of short questions and answers arranged in dialogue form which enlivens these sermons, making them person-to-person contacts we have what may well be the *clavis lignea* to his consummate skill as a preacher. For, completely possessed by love of God and burning with the desire to share his own blessings with his flock, he taught, he questioned, he encouraged, and he reproved his listeners with all the tenderness of a true father, with the keen-sighted precision of a good physician, and with the earnestness of

27 1 Cor. 9.22.

28 See, further, Sister M. Inviolata Barry, *St. Augustine the Orator* (Washington, D.C. 1924).

29 See P. Schaff, *Literature and Poetry* (New York 1890) 68, 87, 101.

a true teacher. That he was eminently successful is attested by the immediate response, often quite audible, of his audience, by the zeal which they manifested in the preservation and promulgation of his sermons, and by the recorded testimony of contemporaries.

Among the manifold works of St. Augustine, then, the sermons hold a unique place. They are different from the philosophical, exegetical, and ascetical works in content, style, and diction in much the same way as Aristotle's exoteric works must have differed from the esoteric. They differ, too, from most sermons in their greater emphasis on dogmas which set the pattern for the entire spiritual and liturgical life of the congregation rather than on other subjects. Likewise, pronouncements upon the merits of the sermons have differed throughout the centuries, but all critics agree that they were great because of the greatness of their author.

The text used in the translation of these sermons is that found in Migne's *Patrologia Latina* 38. Sermons 184, 221, 254, and 261 were taken from D. C. Lambot's recent revision, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Sermones selecti duodeviginti.* Quotations from the Old Testament are cited from the Douay version, with the exception of passages from Genesis; these, along with quotations from the New Testament, are taken from the Confraternity Edition. Any deviations from this procedure are indicated in the footnotes.

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SAINT AUGUSTINE

SERMONS ON THE LITURGICAL SEASONS

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FOR THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

Sermon 184

On the Birthday of Our Lord Jesus Christ

THE BIRTHDAY OF our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, on which Truth sprang forth from the earth[1] and the procession of day from day extending even unto our time began, has, with the return of its anniversary, dawned upon us today as deserving of special celebration. 'Let us be glad and rejoice therein,'[2] for the faith of Christians holds fast to the joy which the lowliness of such sublimity has offered to us, a joy far removed from the hearts of the wicked, since God has hidden these things from the wise and prudent and has revealed them to the little ones.[3] Therefore, let the lowly hold fast to the lowliness of God so that, by means of this great help as by a beast of burden supporting their infirmity, they may come to the mountain of God. The wise and prudent, however, while they aim at the heights of God, do not put their trust in lowly things, but pass them by, and hence they fail to reach the heights. Vain and worthless, puffed up and elated, they have halted,

1 Cf. Ps. 84.12.
2 Ps. 117.24.
3 Cf. Matt. 11.25.

as it were, on the wind-swept middle plain between heaven and earth. Wise and prudent in the rating of this world, they fall short of the standards set by Him who made this world. For, if they possessed the true wisdom which is of God and which is God, they would understand that flesh could have been assumed by God without the possibility of His having been changed into flesh; that He took upon Himself what He was not and remained what He was; that He came to us in the form of man and yet did not depart from His Father; that He preserved His divine nature while He appeared to us in our human nature; and, finally, that power derived from no earthly source was bestowed upon an infant's body. The whole world is His work as He remains in the bosom of His Father; the miraculous child-bearing of a virgin is His work when He comes to us. In fact, His Virgin Mother has given testimony to His majesty in that she, a virgin before His conception, remained a virgin after childbirth; found with child, she was not made so by man; pregnant with man without man's co-operation, she was more blessed and marvelous in that her fecundity was granted without loss of integrity. People prefer to consider so tremendous a miracle as fictional rather than factual. Hence, in regard to Christ, the God-Man, since they cannot believe His human attributes, they despise them; since they cannot despise His divine attributes, they do not believe them. However, in proportion as the body of the God-Man in His humiliation is the more abject in their estimation, to that same degree it becomes more pleasing to us; and in proportion as the fruitfulness of a virgin in the birth of a child is more impossible in their eyes, in ours it becomes the more divine.

(2) Hence, let us celebrate the birthday of the Lord with a joyous gathering and appropriate festivity. Let men and women alike rejoice, for Christ, the Man, was born and He was born of a woman; thus, each sex was honored. Now, let the honor accorded to the first man before his condem-

nation pass over to this second Man. A woman brought death upon us; a woman has now brought forth life. The likeness of our sinful flesh[4] was born so that this sinful flesh might be cleansed. Let not the flesh be blamed, but let it die to sin so that it may live by its real nature; let him who was in sin be born again in Him who was born without sin. Exult, you holy youths, who, having chosen Christ as a model eminently worthy of imitation, have not sought marriage. He whom you have thus esteemed did not come to you through marriage, so that He might bestow upon you the grace to despise the means through which you came into the world. For you came into existence through carnal union, without which He came to spiritual nuptials; and to you, whom He has called in a special way to spiritual nuptials, He has granted the grace to scorn earthly ones. Therefore, you have not sought joys from the source whence you derived existence because you, more than others, have loved Him who did not come into the world in that manner. Exult, you holy virgins. A Virgin has brought forth for you One whom you may wed without defilement, and you can lose the One whom you love neither by conceiving nor by bringing forth children. Exult, you who are just; it is the birthday of the Justifier. Exult, you who are weak and ill; it is the birthday of the Saviour. Exult, you who are captives; it is the birthday of the Redeemer. Exult, you who are slaves; it is the birthday of the Ruler. Exult, you who are free; it is the birthday of the Liberator. Exult, all Christians; it is the birthday of Christ.

(3) This child, born of the Father, created all ages; now, born of a mother, He has commended this day. That first nativity could not possibly have had a mother, nor did the second one call for any man as a father. In a word, Christ was born of both a father and a mother, and He was born without a father and without a mother; for as God He was born of the Father and as Man He was born of a mother;

4 Cf. Rom. 8.3.

as God He was born without a mother and as Man He was born without a father. Therefore, 'Who shall declare his generation?'[5] whether we consider His generation without the limits of time or that without seed; the one without a beginning or that without precedent; the one which has never ceased or that without previous or subsequent existence; the one which has no end or that which has its beginning there where it has its end.

Rightly, then, did the Prophets announce that He would be born; truly did the heavens and angels announce that He had been born. He who sustains the world lay in a manger, a wordless Child, yet the Word of God. Him whom the heavens do not contain the bosom of one woman bore. She ruled our King; she carried Him in whom we exist; she fed our Bread. O manifest weakness and marvelous humility in which all divinity lay hid! By His power He ruled the mother to whom His infancy was subject, and He nourished with truth her whose breasts suckled Him. May He who did not despise our lowly beginnings perfect His work in us, and may He who wished on account of us to become the Son of Man make us the sons of God.

Sermon 185[1]

(1) That day is called the birthday of the Lord on which the Wisdom of God manifested Himself as a speechless Child and the Word of God wordlessly uttered the sound of a human voice. His divinity, although hidden, was revealed by heavenly witness to the Magi and was announced to the shepherds by angelic voices. With yearly ceremony, therefore, we celebrate this day which saw the fulfillment

5 Isa. 53.8.

1 The Navarre Codex assigns this sermon to Maximus, but its style and spirit are definitely St. Augustine's.

of the prophecy: 'Truth is sprung out of the earth: and justice hath looked down from heaven.'[2] Truth, eternally existing in the bosom of the Father, has sprung from the earth so that He might exist also in the bosom of a mother. Truth, holding the world in place, has sprung from the earth so that He might be carried in the hands of a woman. Truth, incorruptibly nourishing the happiness of the angels, has sprung from the earth in order to be fed by human milk. Truth, whom the heavens cannot contain, has sprung from the earth so that He might be placed in a manger. For whose benefit did such unparalleled greatness come in such lowliness? Certainly for no personal advantage, but definitely for our great good, if only we believe. Arouse yourself, O man; for you God has become man. 'Awake, sleeper, and arise from among the dead, and Christ will enlighten thee.'[3] For you, I repeat, God has become man. If He had not thus been born in time, you would have been dead for all eternity. Never would you have been freed from sinful flesh, if He had not taken upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh. Everlasting misery would have engulfed you, if He had not taken this merciful form. You would not have been restored to life, had He not submitted to your death; you would have fallen, had He not succored you; you would have perished, had He not come.

(2) Let us joyfully celebrate the coming of our salvation and redemption. Let us celebrate the festal day on which the great and timeless One came from the great and timeless day to this brief span of our day. He 'has become for us . . . justice, and sanctification, and redemption; so that, just as it is written, "Let him who takes pride, take pride in the Lord."'[4] For, so that we might not resemble the proud Jews who, 'ignorant of the justice of God and seeking to establish their own, have not submitted to the justice of

2 Ps. 84.12.
3 Eph. 5.14.
4 1 Cor. 1.30,31.

God,'[5] when the Psalmist had said: 'Truth is sprung out of the earth,' he quickly added: 'and justice hath looked down from heaven.'[6] He did this lest mortal frailty, arrogating this justice to itself, should call these blessings its own, and lest man should reject the justice of God in his belief that he is justified, that is, made just through his own efforts. 'Truth is sprung out of the earth' because Christ who said: 'I am the truth'[7] was born of a virgin; and 'justice hath looked down from heaven' because, by believing in Him who was so born, man has been justified not by his own efforts but by God. 'Truth is sprung out of the earth' because 'the Word was made flesh,' and 'justice hath looked down from heaven' because 'every good and perfect gift is from above.'[8] 'Truth is sprung out of the earth,' that is, His flesh was taken from Mary; and 'justice hath looked down from heaven' because 'no one can receive anything unless it is given to him from heaven.'[9]

(3) 'Having been justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we also have access by faith unto that grace in which we stand and exult in the hope of the glory . . . of God.'[10] With these few words, which you recognize as those of the Apostle, it gives me pleasure, my brethren, to mingle a few passages of the psalm [which we are considering] and to find that they agree in sentiment. 'Having been justified by faith, let us have peace with God' because 'justice and peace have kissed'; 'through our Lord Jesus Christ' because 'truth is sprung out of the earth'; 'through whom we also have access by faith unto that grace in which we stand, and exult in the hope of the glory of God'—he does not say 'of our glory,' but 'of the glory of God' because justice

5 Rom. 10.3.
6 Ps. 84.12.
7 John 14.6.
8 John 1.14; James 1.17.
9 John 3.27.
10 Cf. Rom. 5.1,2. The text as quoted omits the word *filiorum* of the Vulgate, and thus is closer to the Greek.

has not proceeded from us but 'hath looked down from heaven.'[11] Therefore, 'let him who takes pride, take pride in the Lord'[12] not in himself. Hence, when the Lord whose birthday we are celebrating today was born of the Virgin, the announcement of the angelic choir was made in the words: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will.'[13] How can peace exist on earth unless it be because 'truth is sprung out of the earth,' that is, because Christ has been born in the flesh? Moreover, 'He Himself is our peace, he it is who has made both one'[14] so that we might become men of good will, bound together by the pleasing fetters of unity. Let us rejoice, then, in this grace so that our glory may be the testimony of our conscience[15] wherein we glory not in ourselves but in the Lord. Hence the Psalmist [in speaking of the Lord] has said: 'My glory and the lifter up of my head.'[16] For what greater grace of God could have shone upon us than that, having an only-begotten Son, God should make Him the Son of Man, and thus, in turn, make the son of man the Son of God? Examine it as a benefit, as an inducement, as a token of justice, and see whether you find anything but a gratuitous gift of God.

Sermon 186

(1) Let us rejoice, my brethren, let the nations exult and be glad because, not the visible sun, but the invisible Creator of the sun has consecrated this day on which the Virgin, a true but inviolate Mother, gave birth to Him who became visible for our sake and by whom she herself was created.

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11 Ps. 84.11,12.
12 1. Cor. 1.30,31.
13 Luke 2.14.
14 Eph. 2.14.
15 Cf. 2 Cor. 1.12.
16 Ps. 3.4.

A virgin conceives, yet remains a virgin;[1] a virgin is heavy with child; a virgin brings forth her child, yet she is always a virgin. Why are you amazed at this, O man? It was fitting for God to be born thus when He deigned to become man. Such did He make her, who was born from her; He existed before she was created; and, because He was omnipotent, He was able to become man while remaining what He was. He created His own Mother when He was with the Father; and when He was born of that Mother He remained in His Father. How would He who granted to His Mother the privilege of remaining a virgin when she brought forth her child cease to be God when He became Man? Furthermore, the fact that the Word became flesh does not imply that the Word withdrew and was destroyed on being clothed with flesh, but rather that flesh, to avoid destruction, drew near to the Word, so that, as man is soul and body, Christ might be God and Man. The same One who is Man is God, and the same One who is God is Man, not by a confusion of nature but by a unity of person. Finally, He who is the Son of God, being born of the Father, is always co-eternal with His Father; He, being born of the Virgin, became the Son of Man. Thus, humanity was added to the divinity of the Son without producing a fourfold union of Persons; the Trinity remains.

(2) Do not, therefore, let the opinion of certain persons who are unmindful of the rule of faith and of the words of the sacred Scriptures influence you. For these persons say: 'He who was the Son of Man became the Son of God; He who is the Son of God did not become the Son of Man.' In making this statement they have concentrated their attention on a principle that is true, but they have not been able to elucidate the truth. For to what principle did they direct their attention except that human nature could have been changed into something higher, but that divine nature could not have been changed into some-

1 The reading *permanens virgo* of the Mss. was adopted here in place of *pariens virgo* of the text.

thing lower? That is true, but, even so, the Word became flesh without the divinity being changed into something lower, for the Gospel does not say: 'Flesh was made the Word,' but it does say: 'The Word was made flesh.' Moreover, the Word is God, [as the Evangelist says:] 'The Word was God.'[2] And what is flesh but man? Furthermore, this flesh of man did not exist in Christ without a soul, since He says: 'My soul is sad, even unto death.'[3] If, therefore, the Word is God and man is flesh, what else does the statement, 'The Word was made flesh,' signify except that He who was God became Man? And, by the same reasoning, He who was the Son of God became the Son of Man by taking upon Himself a lower nature without changing His higher nature, by receiving what He was not, not by losing what He was. For, how would we proclaim in the Creed that we believe in the Son of God who was born of the Virgin Mary, if it were not the Son of God but the Son of Man who was born of the Virgin Mary? What Christian would deny that the Son of Man was born of that woman; that God became Man; and that, thus, a God-Man was born, since 'The Word was God' and 'the Word was made flesh'? Therefore, we must admit that He who was the Son of God, in order to be born of the Virgin Mary, assumed the form of a servant and became the Son of Man, remaining what He was and taking upon Himself what He was not, beginning to exist in that, as Man, He was less than the Father, yet always existing in so far as He and the Father are one.

(3) For, if He who is eternally the Son of God did not become the Son of Man, how does the Apostle say of Him: 'Who though he was by nature God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be clung to, but emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave, being made like unto men, and appearing in the form of man'?[4] Not another, but He Him-

2 John 1.14,1.
3 Matt. 26.38.
4 Phil. 2.6-8.

self, equal to the Father in the form of God, He the only-begotten Son of the Father 'emptied himself, being made like unto men.' Not another, but He Himself, equal to the Father in the form of God, 'humbled' not another but 'himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross.'[5] All this the Son of God accomplished only under the form of the Son of Man. Likewise, if He who is always the Son of God did not become the Son of Man, how does the Apostle describe himself in his Epistle to the Romans as: 'set apart for the gospel of God, which he had promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son who was born to him according to the flesh of the offspring of David'?[6] Behold, He who had always been the Son of God was made one of the offspring of David according to the flesh, becoming that which He had not been before. Likewise, if He who is the Son of God did not become the Son of Man, how it is that 'God sent his Son, born of a woman'?[7] In the Hebrew language, virginal integrity is not denied by this word, but female sex is indicated. Who was sent by the Father except the only-begotten Son of God? How, then, was He born of a woman unless this same Son of God who was with the Father was sent and became the Son of Man? Born of the Father without the limits of time, He was born of a Mother on this day. This day, which He created, He chose for His own creation in the flesh, just as He was born of the Mother whom He Himself had created. This day, from which each subsequent day receives additional light, symbolizes the work of Christ by whom our inner man is renewed day by day.[8] It was indeed fitting that the day on which all temporal creation was in peace and harmony should be the birthday of the eternal Creator now created in time.

5 Phil. 2.8.
6 Rom. 1.1-4.
7 Gal. 4.4.
8 Cf. 2 Cor. 4.16.

Sermon 187

(1) My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, of that Lord by whom all things were made and who was made [flesh] amid all the works of His hands; who is the Manifestor of His Father, the Creator of His Mother; Son of God born of the Father without a mother, Son of Man born of a mother without a father; the great Day of the angels, small in the day of men; the Word as God existing before all time, the Word as flesh existing only for an allotted time; the Creator of the sun created under the light of the sun; ordering all ages from the bosom of of His Father, from the womb of His Mother consecrating this day; remaining there, yet proceeding hither; Maker of heaven and earth brought forth on this earth overshadowed by the heavens; unspeakably wise, wisely speechless; filling the whole world, lying in a manger; guiding the stars, a nursling at the breast; though insignificant in the form of man, so great in the form of God that His greatness was not lessened by His insignificance nor was His smallness crushed by His might. When He assumed human form He did not abandon His divine operations, nor did He cease to reach 'from end to end mightily and to order all things sweetly.'[1] When clothed in the weakness of our flesh He was received, not imprisoned, in the Virgin's womb so that without the Food of Wisdom being withdrawn from the angels we might taste how sweet is the Lord.

(2) Why do we marvel at these conflicting powers of the Word of God when the discourse which I utter is apprehended so freely by the senses that the hearer receives it, yet does not confine it? If it were not received, it would give no instruction; if it were confined, it would not reach others. In spite of the fact that this discourse is divided into words and syllables, you do not take individual particles of it as you do of food for your stomach, but you all hear

1 Cf. Wisd. 8.1.

the whole discourse and each individual takes in the whole. While speaking, I do not fear that one listener may, by hearing me, grasp the whole discourse so that his neighbor can get nothing of it. On the contrary, I wish you to be so attentive that, depriving the ear and mind of no other person, you as individuals may hear the entire discourse and, at the same time, may permit others to hear it, also. Nor is this hearing accomplished at successive periods of time so that, after the discourse which is being delivered has come to you first, it leaves you so that it may go to another person. No, it comes to all at the same time and the whole discourse is apprehended by each individual. And if the entire sermon could be retained in memory, then, just as you all came to hear the whole discourse so you individually would go away bearing the whole discourse with you. How much more readily, then, would the Word of God, through whom all things were made and who, remaining in Himself, renews all things, who is neither confined by places nor restrained by time, neither changed by long or short intervals of time, neither adorned by speech nor terminated by silence, be able to make fertile the womb of His Mother when He assumed human flesh, yet not leave the bosom of His Father; to make His way hither for human eyes to gaze upon Him, and still to enlighten angelic minds; to come down to this earth while ruling the heavens; to become Man here while creating men there?

(3) Let no one believe, then, that the Son of God was changed into the Son of Man; rather, let us believe that, with the perfect preservation of His divine nature and the perfect assumption of human nature, He, remaining the Son of God, became also the Son of Man. For the fact that the Scriptures say 'The Word was God' and 'The Word was made flesh'[2] does not mean that the Word became flesh in such a way as to cease to be God since, because the Word was made flesh, in that same flesh 'Emmanuel . . .

2 John 1.1,14.

God with us' was born.[3] In like manner, the word which we form within us becomes an utterance when we bring it forth from our mouth; the word is not changed into the utterance, but the voice by which it comes forth is taken on while the inner word remains unchanged; what is thought remains within, what is heard sounds forth. Nevertheless, the same thing is expressed in sound which had previously been expressed in silence; thus, when the word becomes an utterance, it is not changed into this utterance, but remains in the light of the mind; having taken on the voice of the flesh, it reaches the listener without leaving the thinker. Not when the utterance, whether it be in Greek, Latin, or any other language, is being thought out in silence, but when, before all the diversity of language [begins to operate], the matter to be expressed exists bare and unadorned in the chamber of the heart, is it clothed with the voice of the speaker so that it may come forth. Both that which is considered in the mind, however, and that which sounds forth in speech are variable and diverse; the thought will not remain when you have forgotten it, nor will the utterance remain when you are silent. But the Word of the Lord remains forever and remains unchanged.

(4) When the Word assumed flesh in time, so that He might enter into our temporal life, He did not, in this flesh, give up His eternity, but gave immortality to this flesh. Thus He, 'as a bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber, hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way,'[4] who, 'though he was by nature God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be clung to,'[5] but, so that for our sake He might become what He was not, 'He emptied himself,' not laying aside the nature of God, but 'taking the nature of a slave,' and by this nature 'being made like unto men,' not in His own nature [as God], but 'appearing in the form of man.' For, all that we are

3 Cf. Matt. 1.23.
4 Ps. 18.6.
5 Phil. 2.6-8.

in soul and body constitutes, for us, our complete nature, but, for Him, only a visible nature. If we had not this soul and body, we would still exist; if He had not this soul and body, He would still be God. Remaining God, He became Man; that is, He began to be what had not been before, so that not one but two natures may truthfully be ascribed to Him. Because He was made Man, the statement, 'For the Father is greater than I,' is true; because He remained God, the statement, 'I and the Father are one,' is true. If the Word were changed into flesh, that is, if God were changed into man, only the statement, 'For the Father is greater than I,' would be true because God is greater than man; but the other statement, 'I and the Father are one,' would be false since God and man are not one. In such a case, He could say: 'I and the Father were one,' but not 'are one,' implying that He has ceased to be what He was; that He was so in the past, but is so no longer. On the contrary, because of the true nature of servant which He had taken upon Himself, He said truthfully: 'The Father is greater than I'; because of the true nature of God which He retained, He said with equal veracity: 'The Father and I are one.'[6] Therefore, He emptied Himself among men, becoming what He had not been previously, not in such a way as to cease to be what He was, but, hiding what He was, He showed forth only what He had become. Hence, since the Virgin conceived and brought forth a Son, because of His manifest nature of servant, [we read:] 'A child is born to us';[7] but, because the Word of God, which remains forever, became flesh so that He might dwell with us, on account of His real, though hidden nature of God, we, using the words of the Angel Gabriel, call 'his name Emmanuel.' Remaining God, He has become Man so that the Son of Man may rightly be called 'God with us' and so that [in Him] God is not one person and man another. Let the world rejoice

6 John 14.28; 10.30.
7 Isa. 9.6.

in those who believe, for whose salvation He came, by whom the world was made, the Creator of Mary born of Mary, the Son of David yet Lord of David, the Seed of Abraham who existed before Abraham, the Fashioner of this earth fashioned on this earth, the Creator of heaven created as Man under the light of heaven. This is the day which the Lord has made and the Lord Himself is the bright Day of our heart. Let us walk in His light; let us exult and be glad in Him.

Sermon 188

(1) It is not at all strange that human consideration and human speech are inadequate when we undertake to praise the Son of God, the Word of God and God Himself, the Life and Light of men, as He exists in the bosom of the Father, equal to and co-eternal with Him in whom all things visible and invisible, in heaven and on earth, were established. For how would our tongue be able to pay suitable tribute to Him whom our heart, destined by God to be the instrument by which He is to be seen, as yet cannot see, if iniquity would be purged, weakness be healed, and the clean of heart become blessed because they will see God?[1] It is not strange, I say, for us to fail to find words in which to speak of the Word by whom the word was spoken which gave being to us who would now say something about Him. For our mind brings words into existence after they have been thought over and formed, but our mind itself is formed by the Word. Nor does man fashion words in the same way in which man was made by the Word, because the Father Himself did not beget His only Word in the same way in which He made all things through the Word. For God begot God, but the Begettor and the Begotten are one and the same God. Moreover, God made the world but the world passes while God remains. Although these things which

1 Cf. Matt. 5.8.

were made certainly did not make themselves, He by whom all things were made was made by no one. It is not strange, then, that man, one of those created things, does not know how to discuss the Word by whom all things were made.

(2) Let us direct our ears and minds to this consideration for a little while to see if, by any chance, we can say something suitable and worthy, not by reason of the fact that 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God,' but because 'the Word was made flesh'; to see if, by chance, something adequate may be expressed by us because He 'dwelt among us'[2]; or if, perchance, He may be satisfactorily discussed there where He wished to be seen. For these reasons we celebrate this day on which He deigned to be born of a virgin, a generation which He Himself caused to be narrated by men. But 'who shall declare his generation'[3] in that eternity in which God was born of God? Such a day set apart for solemn celebration does not exist in eternity, for the day in eternity does not pass, destined to return with the revolving year; it remains without a setting because it began without a rising. Therefore, the only-begotten Word of God, the Life and Light of men, is indeed the Eternal Day, but this day on which, joined to human flesh, He became, as it were, a 'bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber'[4] is our today and passes as tomorrow becomes yesterday. Nevertheless, our today commends the Eternal Day born of the Virgin because the Eternal Day born of the Virgin consecrated this day. What praises shall we voice, what thanks shall we give for the charity of God who so loved us that for us He by whom all time was made became Man in time; that He, in His eternity more ancient than the world, became inferior in age to many of His servants in the world; that He who made man became Man; that He was formed

2 John 1.1,14.
3 Isa. 53.8.
4 Ps. 18.6.

in the Mother whom He Himself formed, carried in the hands which He made, nourished at the breasts which He filled; that, in the manger in mute infancy, He the Word without whom all human eloquence is mute wailed?

(3) Consider, O man, what God became for your sake; understand this lesson of surpassing humility presented by a teacher who, as yet, says no word. Once, in paradise,[5] you were so eloquent that you named every living thing; for your sake, however, your Creator lay speechless and did not even call His Mother by her name. By disregarding obedience, you have lost yourself in the tractless reaches of fruitful groves; He, in obedience, came into the very narrow confines of mortality so that by dying He might seek you who were dead. Though you were man, you wished to be God, to your own destruction; though He was God, He wished to be man that He might find what He had lost. Human pride brought you to such a depth that only divine humility could raise you up again.

Therefore, let us celebrate with joy the day on which Mary brought forth the Saviour; on which the one joined in marriage brought forth the Creator of the union, and a virgin, the Prince of virgins; on which one given to a husband is a mother not by that husband, since she was a virgin before marriage and in marriage, a virgin when with child and when nursing her child. The birth of her omnipotent Son detracted in no way from the virginity of holy Mary, whom He Himself chose when He contemplated the assumption of human nature. Fertility is a blessing in marriage, but integrity in holiness is better. Therefore, the Man Christ who was able to furnish both prerogatives to His Mother (for He was God as well as Man) would never have granted to His Mother the blessing in which wives delight in such a way as to deprive her of the better gift for which virgins forego motherhood. And so, the holy Church, as a virgin, celebrates today the child-bearing of a

5 Cf. Gen. 2.19-21; 3.

virgin. For to the Church the Apostle says: 'I have betrothed you to one spouse, that I might present you a chaste virgin to Christ.'[6] Why, addressing so many persons of both sexes, including not only youths and maidens but also married men and women, does he say 'a chaste virgin'? Why is this, I repeat, unless he refers to the integrity of faith, hope, and charity? Hence, Christ, intending to establish virginity in the heart of the Church, preserved it first in the body of Mary. In human marriage, a woman is given to her husband so that she may no longer be a virgin; but the Church could not be a virgin unless she had first found the Son of the Virgin as a spouse to whom she might be given.

Sermon 189

(1) The Eternal Day who made all days has sanctified this day for us, my brethren. Of Him the Psalmist writes: 'Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle: sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing ye to the Lord and bless his name: bless his salvation from day to day.'[1] What does this phrase 'from day to day' mean unless it be that the Son was born of the Father, Light of Light? That Eternal Day called into being this Day, who was born of a virgin today. The Eternal Day, therefore, has no beginning and no end. I refer to God the Father. What is this Day if it be not Light? Not the light of carnal eyes, the light which we share with beasts, but the Light which shines upon the angels, by the brilliance of which hearts are cleansed. The night in which we live, and in which the lamps of the Scriptures are lighted for us, passes; then that Light will come which is foretold in the psalm: 'In the morning I will stand before thee, and I will contemplate thee.'[2]

6 2 Cor. 11.2.

1 Cf. Ps. 95.1-3.
2 Cf. Ps. 5.5.

(2) That Day, then, the Word of God, the Day which shines upon the angels, the Day which brightens the homeland from whence we came, was born clothed in flesh of the Virgin Mary, was wondrously brought forth, for what is more wondrous than the child-bearing of a virgin? She conceives and is still a virgin; she brings forth her Child and remains a virgin. He was formed in her whom He Himself formed; He gave her fertility but He did not mar her integrity. Whence did Mary spring? From Adam. Whence did Adam come? From the earth. If Mary sprang from Adam, and if Adam came from the earth, then Mary, too, came from the earth. If this is so, let us acknowledge the truth of the words: 'Truth is sprung out of the earth.' What benefit has Truth bestowed upon us? 'Truth is sprung out of the earth and justice hath looked down from heaven.'[3] For the Jews, as the Apostle says, 'ignorant of the justice of God and seeking to establish their own, have not submitted to the justice of God.'[4] How can man become just? Of himself? What poor man gives bread to himself? What naked person clothes himself unless clothes have been given to him? Whence does justice come? What justice is there without faith? For 'he who is just lives by faith.'[5] He lies who says that he is just without faith, for he lies in whom there is no faith. If anyone wishes to speak the truth, let him turn to the Truth. For Truth which 'is sprung out of the earth' was far removed from you. You were sleeping; Truth came to you. You were wrapped in heavy slumber; Truth aroused you and prepared a path for you lest you should be lost. Hence, 'Truth is sprung out of the earth,' since Christ was born of a virgin, and 'Justice hath looked down from heaven,' that, through justice men might learn to relish again what through injustice they had foolishly cast aside.

(3) We were mortal, overwhelmed by our sins; we bore

3 Ps. 84.12.
4 Rom. 10.3.
5 Rom. 1.17.

the penalties of our sins. Every man, at birth, begins life in wretchedness. Do not seek for a prophetic utterance in this regard; ask the child who is born; see his tears. Since this wretchedness was the mark of God's anger on the earth, what sort of condescension came suddenly into His attitude? 'Truth is sprung out of the earth.' He created all things; He [as man] was created among all things. He made the day; He came into the day. He is the Lord Christ existing without a beginning eternally with His Father, yet He has a birthday. In the first place, if the Word had not had human generation, we would not have acquired divine regeneration; He was born so that we might be born again. Christ was born; let no one hesitate to be reborn. He was generated with no need of regeneration, for who has experienced the need of rebirth except the one whose birth was blameworthy? Let His compassion, then, be born in our hearts. His Mother carried Him in her womb; let us carry Him in our hearts. The Virgin was heavy with the incarnate Christ; may our hearts be heavily freighted with belief in Christ. The Virgin brought forth the Saviour; may our souls bring forth salvation; may we bring forth praise also. Let us not be sterile; let our souls be full of fruitfulness in the Lord.

(4) The twofold generation of Christ is admirable; the first, His birth of a Father without a mother, is eternal; the second, His birth of a Mother without a father, happened in time. Eternal Himself, He was born of His eternal Father. Why do you wonder? He is God. Consider His divinity, and all cause for wonder will cease. Let amazement pass away; let praise ascend; let faith be present; believe what has happened. Has not God humiliated Himself enough for you? He who was God became Man. The inn was too small; wrapped in swaddling clothes, He was placed in a manger. Who does not marvel? He who fills the world found no room in an inn. Placed in a manger, He became our food. Let the two animals, symbolic of two races, approach the manger, for 'the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's

crib.'[6] Do not be ashamed to be God's beast of burden. Carrying Christ, you will not go astray; with Him burdening you, you make your way through devious paths. May the Lord rest upon us; may He direct us where He wishes; may we be His beast of burden and thus may we come to Jerusalem. Though He presses upon us, we are not crushed but lifted up; when He leads us, we shall not go astray. Through Him may we come to Him so that we may rejoice forever with the Child who was born today.

Sermon 190

(1) Our Lord Jesus, who was with the Father before He was born of His Mother, chose not only the Virgin of whom He was born, but also the day on which His birth took place. Men subject to error very often choose days: one for planting, another for building, another for making a journey, and still another for contracting marriage. When a man so chooses, he is motivated by the hope that successful issue may come from his undertaking. No one, however, can choose the day of his birth. But Christ the Lord was able both to create and to select the day of His birth. Nor did He make His choice as they do who foolishly determine the fates of men by the arrangement of the stars. He who was born was not rendered blessed by being born on a particular day, but He made that day blessed on which He deigned to be born. The day of His nativity holds the mystery of His light, for the Apostle says: 'The night is far advanced; the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light. Let us walk becomingly as in the day.'[1] Let us recognize the day and let us be as the day, for we were in darkness when we lived unfaithfully. Since that infidelity which had covered

6 Isa. 1.3.

1 Rom. 13.12.

the whole world with the darkness of night had to be lessened by an increase of faith, therefore, on the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ, night began to suffer diminution and day began to increase. And so, my brethren, let us hold this day as sacred, not as unbelievers do because of the material sun, but because of Him who made the sun. For, He who was the Word became flesh so that for our sake He might live under the light of the sun. He was incarnate beneath the sun, but in majesty He was above the entire universe in which He had placed the sun. Now, in truth, even in the flesh He is above the sun which is worshiped as a god by those who, blinded in mind, do not see the true Sun of Justice.

(2) Let us, O Christians, celebrate this feast, not of the divine nativity of the Lord, but of His human nativity when He became one of us so that through the invisible made visible we might pass to the invisible from the visible. For we of the Catholic faith ought to hold that there are two births of the Lord: the one divine, and the other human; the one timeless, and the other in time. Both nativities are marvelous: the one, without a mother; and the other, without a father. If the one is incomprehensible, the other is inexplicable. Who could understand this strange, extraordinary happening, unique in the history of the world, wherein the unbelievable became believable and in unbelievable fashion was entrusted to the whole world; namely, that a virgin would conceive and would bear and bring forth a Son, while remaining a virgin? What human reason does not grasp faith lays hold on; and where human reason fails faith succeeds. For who would say that the Word of God, by whom all things were made, could not have taken flesh even without a mother, just as He made the first man without father and mother? However, since He had created both sexes, that is, male and female, He wished to honor, in His birth, both sexes which He had come to save. You know well that the first man fell because the Serpent, not daring to address the

man, used the help of a woman to encompass man's ruin. Through the weaker sex he gained the stronger and, worming his way in through the one, he triumphed over both. Therefore, so that we would not be able to shudder with a sentiment of justifiable grief at our death in this woman, Eve, and to believe ourselves irreparably condemned, when the Lord came to seek what was lost, He wished to approve both sexes by honoring both because both had been ruined. In regard to neither sex, then, should we do injury to the Creator; the nativity of the Lord encouraged both to hope for salvation. The glory of the male sex is in the humanity of Christ; the glory of womanhood is in the Mother of Christ. The grace of Jesus Christ has worsted the wile of the Serpent.

(3) Therefore, let both sexes be reborn in Him who was born today and let both celebrate this feast on which the Lord Christ, far from beginning to exist—since He had always existed with His Father—brought forth into the light of day the human nature which He had received from His Mother when He granted her fertility without depriving her of integrity. He is conceived and born; He is an Infant. Who is this Infant whom we so call because He is not able to speak? He is both a speechless Child and He is the Word. In His humanity, He is silent; through His angels, He teaches. The Leader and Shepherd of shepherds is announced to shepherds, and the food of the faithful lies in the manger of dumb beasts. For the Prophet had predicted: 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib.'[2] For that reason He sat upon the colt of an ass when He entered Jerusalem amid the praises of the multitude surging around and before Him.[3] Let us understand; let us draw near to the manger; let us eat of this food; let us bear the Lord, our Guide and Leader—so that under His direction we may come to the heavenly Jerusalem. The birth of Christ from His Mother is

2 Isa. 1.3.
3 Cf. Matt. 21.1-9.

subject to human weakness, but from His Father He has unlimited majesty. In these fleeting days of ours He lives for a brief span but He is the Eternal Day born of Eternal Day.

Rightly, then, are we stirred by the voice of the Psalmist as by the sound of a heavenly trumpet, when we hear: 'Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle: sing to the Lord all the earth. Sing ye to the Lord and bless His name.'[4] Let us recognize, then, and proclaim the 'Day born of the Day' who became incarnate on this day. The Day is the Son born of the Father, the Eternal Day, God of God, Light of Light; He is our Salvation, of whom the Psalmist says elsewhere: 'May God have mercy on us, and bless us: may He cause the light of his countenance to shine upon us . . . That we may know thy way upon earth: thy salvation in all nations.'[5] The idea expressed in 'upon the earth' he expanded to 'in all nations' and the significance of 'thy way' he repeated in 'thy salvation.' We recall that the Lord Himself said: 'I am the way.'[6] And only recently, when the Gospel was read, we heard that the thrice-blessed old man, Simeon, had received a divine promise that he would not experience death until he had seen Christ the Lord and that, when he had taken the infant Christ into his hands and had recognized the mighty little One, he said: 'Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace; Because my eyes have seen thy salvation.'[7] Gladly, then, let us announce His salvation, this Day born of the Eternal Day, let us declare 'his glory among the Gentiles: his wonders among all people.'[8] He lies in a manger but He holds the world in His hand; he is nourished at the breast but He feeds the angels; He is wrapped in swaddling clothes but He clothes us with immortality; He is suckled but is adored; He does not find

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4 Ps. 95.1-3.
5 Ps. 66.2.
6 John 14.6.
7 Luke 2.29-31.
8 Ps. 95.2-4.

room in the inn but He makes a temple for Himself in the hearts of believers. For Strength took on weakness that weakness might become strong. Therefore, let us marvel at rather than despise His human birth; from it let us learn the lowliness which such loftiness assumed for our sake. Then let us enkindle our love so that we may come to His eternal day.

Sermon 191

Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, the true Sun of Justice, so shone upon the earth as not to leave the heavens, remaining there eternally, but coming hither for a time; there determining the everlasting day, here enduring the day of humanity; there living perpetually without the passage of time, here dying in time without the inroads of sin; there remaining in life without end, here freeing our life from the destruction of death. There He enkindles the minds of angels with the fiery splendor of His majesty; here He determines the lives and characters of men. There light is received which no one extinguishes by sin; here Man is born who clearly defines all sin. There God is with God; here He is God and Man. There He is Light of Light; here, the Light which enlightens every man. There by a word He spreads out the heavens; here He shows a way of reaching the heavens. There with His Father He confirmed the mystery of His nativity; here He formed His human members in His Mother. There sitting at the right hand of the Father, here lying in a manger; there feeding the angels, here on earth a hungry Child; there unfailing Bread with perfect powers, here, along with speechless children, needing the nourishment of milk; there doing good, here suffering evil; there never dying, here rising after death and bestowing eternal life on mortals. God became man so that man might become God. The Lord took the form of a servant so that man might be turned to God. The Founder and Inhabitant

of heaven dwelt upon earth so that man might rise from earth to heaven.[1]

(1) The Word of the Father, by whom all time was created, was made flesh and was born in time for us. He, without whose divine permission no day completes its course, wished to have one day [set aside] for His human birth. In the bosom of His Father, He existed before all the cycles of ages; born of an earthly Mother, He entered upon the course of the years on this day. The Maker of man became Man that He, Ruler of the stars, might be nourished at the breast; that He, the Bread, might be hungry; that He, the Fountain, might thirst; that He, the Light, might sleep; that He, the Way, might be wearied by the journey; that He, the Truth, might be accused by false witnesses; that He, the Judge of the living and the dead, might be brought to trial by a mortal judge; that He, Justice, might be condemned by the unjust; that He, Discipline, might be scourged with whips; that He, the Grape,[2] might be crowned with thorns; that He, the Foundation, might be suspended upon a cross; that Courage might be weakened; that Security might be wounded; that Life might die. To endure these and similar indignities for us, to free us, unworthy creatures, He who existed as the Son of God before all ages, without a beginning, deigned to become the Son of Man in these recent years. He did this although He who submitted to such great evils

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1 This extended exordium is prefixed to this sermon in several manuscripts. Although its rather monotonous succession of balanced phrases seems to indicate the work of an assiduous disciple of St. Augustine, the content, vocabulary, and style resemble the other sermons so closely that it has been included here on the supposition that it may have been an unfinished preliminary sketch by St. Augustine.

2 This metaphor by which Christ is represented under the imagery of the grape is developed at greater length in a previous sermon (137.13), wherein St. Augustine says that the grapes referred to in '*Numquid colligunt de spinis uvas*' (Matt. 7.16.) are the words of truth issuing from the Pharisees in spite of the obstacles arising from their perverse deeds. In the present passage St. Augustine applies the same figure to the Word of God who was thwarted and opposed by the Pharisees.

for our sake had done no evil and although we, who were the recipients of so much good at His hands, had done nothing to merit these benefits. Begotten by the Father, He was not made by the Father; He was made Man in the Mother whom He Himself had made, so that He might exist here for a while, sprung from her who could never and nowhere have existed except through His power.

Thus the prediction of the Psalmist was fulfilled: 'Truth is sprung out of the earth.'[3] Mary, a virgin before conception, remained a virgin after childbirth. Far be it that in this earth, that is, in the flesh out of which Truth has sprung, integrity should be marred. Indeed, after His Resurrection, when He was thought to be merely a spirit and not actually corporeal, He said: 'Feel me and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.'[4] Nevertheless, the substance of His mature body passed through closed doors to His disciples.[5] Why, then, could He, who as a grown man was able to enter through closed portals, not pass through incorrupt members as an infant? To neither the one nor the other of these marvels do unbelievers wish to give their assent. Therefore, faith believes both, because infidelity believes neither. In truth, this is that type of unbelief which sees no divinity in Christ. Furthermore, if faith believes that God was born in the flesh, it does not doubt that the two miracles are possible to God, namely, that though the doors of the house were closed, He manifested His mature body to those within the house, and that as an infant He came forth, a spouse from His bride-chamber, that is, from the virginal womb, leaving His Mother's integrity inviolate.[6]

(2) The only-begotten Son of God deigned to take upon Himself a human nature drawn from a virgin so that He might thus link a spotless Church to Himself, its spotless

3 Ps. 84.12.
4 Luke 24.39.
5 Cf. John 20.19.
6 Cf. Ps. 18.6.

Founder. In doing so He not only thought of virgins undefiled in body, but He also desired that, in that Church which the Apostle Paul calls a virgin, the minds of all should be undefiled. 'For I betrothed you to one spouse, that I might present you a chaste virgin to Christ.'[7] The Church, therefore, imitating the Mother of her Lord in mind, though not in body, is both mother and virgin. Since the virginity of His Mother was in no way violated in the birth of Christ, He likewise made His Church a virgin by ransoming her from the fornication of demons. You holy virgins, born of her undefiled virginity, who, scorning earthly nuptials, have chosen to be virgins in the flesh, rejoice now and celebrate with all solemnity the fecundity of the Virgin on this day. The Lord was, indeed, born of a woman, but He was conceived in her without man's co-operation. He who has offered to you this blessing of virginity to cherish did not deprive His Mother of that gift. Far be it that He who repairs in you the harm wrought by Eve should even in the slightest degree mar in His Mother Mary that virginity which you have prized.

(3) She in whose footsteps you are following had no human intercourse when she conceived; she remained a virgin when she brought forth her child. Imitate her as far as you can, not in her fecundity, because this is not in your power, but in the preservation of your virginity. She alone enjoyed both prerogatives; you have chosen one of them and you lose this one if you desire to possess both. She alone could be both virgin and mother because she brought forth the omnipotent Lord by whose power she thus miraculously conceived. It was fitting that the only-begotten Son of God alone should become the Son of Man in this way. Nevertheless, the fact that Christ is the Son of only one virgin does not preclude any relation between you and Him. Indeed, you have gained as the spouse of your heart Him whom you could not bring forth as your child in the flesh. He is a

7 2 Cor. 11.2.

spouse whom your joy so cherishes as a redeemer that your virginity does not shrink from Him in fear of violation. For He who did not deprive His Mother of virginity by actual child-bearing preserves that virginity in you to a much greater degree in His spiritual embrace. Do not consider yourselves sterile because you remain virgins, for that holy integrity of the flesh conduces to fertility of the soul. Do as the Apostle directs. Since you do not ponder over the things of the world, wondering how you may please husbands, think about the things of the Lord and consider how you can please Him in all respects,[8] so that you may have offspring, not of the flesh, but of the soul, that is, of virtues. Finally, I address all here present; I speak to all; I include in my exhortations the whole Church, that chaste virgin whom the Apostle speaks of as espoused to Christ.[9] Do, in the inner chambers of your soul, what you view with amazement in the flesh of Mary. He who believes in his heart unto justice conceives Christ; he who with his mouth makes profession of faith unto salvation brings forth Christ.[10] Thus, in your souls, let fertility abound and virginity be preserved.

Sermon 192

(1) On this day 'Truth is sprung out of the earth';[1] Christ was born as Man. Rejoice as befits a great feast; reminded by this temporal day, consider the Eternal Day and desire eternal gifts with unfaltering hope; according to the privilege granted to you, presume to be the sons of God. For your sake the Maker of time has been made in time; for your sake the divine Architect of the world has appeared in

8 Cf. 1 Cor. 7.32-35.
9 Cf. 2 Cor. 11.2.
10 Cf. Rom. 10.10.

1 Ps. 84.12.

human form; for your sake the Creator has been created. Why, O mortals, are you still delighted with passing trifles and why do you attempt to grasp this fleeting life, as if this could be done? A far brighter hope has now shone upon the earth as a pledge to mortal men of life in heaven. To gain credence in this promise an incredible event has been permitted. He who was God became Man in His effort to make godlike those who were men; without relinquishing what He was, He desired to become what He had made. He Himself fashioned what He would become, in that He added man's nature to God without losing God's nature in man. We marvel at the child-bearing of a virgin and we try to convince unbelievers of this unheard-of manner of birth wherein the fetal life began without seed, and the mother, without human intercourse, brought forth a son of man, whose father she did not embrace as man, and wherein the integrity of virginity remained intact in conception and incorrupt in parturition. God's power is wonderful but more marvelous is His mercy, for He, who was able to be born in this manner, wished to be so born. He who was born as the only Son of His Mother was already the only Son of His Father; He was fashioned as man by the Mother whom He Himself had made; existing eternally with His Father, He took a temporal existence from His Mother; created by His Mother after His Mother, He was uncreated by His Father before all time; without Him the Father never existed; without Him His Mother would never have existed.

(2) Rejoice, virgins of Christ, for the Mother of Christ is your associate. You could not have borne the Christ-Child, but for the love of Christ you have not desired to bear any child. He who was not born of you was born for you. However, if you remember His words, as you should, you know that you are His mothers because you do the will of His Father. For He Himself has said: 'Whoever does the will of my Father . . . he is my brother and sister and mother.'[2]

2 Cf. Matt. 12.50.

Rejoice, widows of Christ, for you have vowed the holiness of continency to Him who made your virginity fruitful. Rejoice, you who are chaste in marriage, living faithfully with your husbands; guard in your hearts what you have lost in body. Since physical integrity is no longer possible for you, let your conscience be intact in faith even as the whole Church is virginal. In Mary, consecrated virginity brought forth Christ; in Anna, aged widowhood recognized the little Christ; in Elizabeth, conjugal chastity and late fertility struggled for Christ. All classes of faithful members have brought to their Head what by His grace they were able to give. In like manner do you, because Christ is Truth and Peace and Justice, conceive Him in faith and show Him forth in works. Let your heart accomplish in the law of Christ what Mary's womb wrought in the flesh of Christ. How are you not included in the child-bearing of the Virgin since you are the members of Christ? Mary brought forth your Head; the Church, you His members. For the Church, too, is both mother and virgin: mother by the bowels of charity, virgin by the integrity of faith and piety. She brings forth diverse peoples, but they are members of Him whose body and spouse she is, and even in this respect she bears the likeness of the Virgin because in the midst of many she is the mother of unity.

(3) Let us all, therefore, unanimously, with chaste minds and holy affections, celebrate this birthday of the Lord on which we came into being according to the words: 'Truth is sprung out of the earth.'[3] For the following passage of the same psalm has already been fulfilled. When He who sprang from this earth, that is, who was born of flesh, ascended into heaven, then without a doubt 'Justice hath looked down from heaven,' because He came from heaven and is above all men.[4] He Himself commends this justice in the words He used when promising the Holy Spirit: 'He will convict

3 Ps. 84.12.
4 Cf. John 3.31.

the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in me; of justice, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more.'[5] This is the justice which hath looked down from heaven for 'his going out is from the end of heaven, and his circuit even to the end thereof.'[6] Lest anyone should despise the Truth because He sprang from the earth when as a spouse He came forth from His bride-chamber, that is, from the virginal womb and when He, the Word of God, was united in an ineffable union with human nature—I repeat, lest anyone should despise Him on that account and believe that Christ, although marvelous in His birth, and in His words and deeds, was, because of the likeness of sinful flesh, nothing more than man, the Psalmist, after saying: 'As a bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way,' immediately adds: 'His going out is from the end of heaven.'[7] Therefore, the words which you hear, 'Truth is sprung out of the earth,' constitute an honor, not a mere condition; they are a mark of mercy, not of misery. Truth descended from heaven that He might spring forth from earth; His going out is from the end of heaven so that as a bridegroom He might proceed from His bride-chamber. Hence it is that He was born on the day which is the shortest in our earthly reckoning and from which subsequent days begin to increase in length. He, therefore, who bent low and lifted us up chose the shortest day, yet the one whence light begins to increase. By such a coming, though silent, He urged us, as with the sound of a mighty voice, to learn how to be rich in Him who became poor for us; to accept freedom in Him who took the form of a slave for us; to possess heaven in Him who sprang from earth for us.

5 John 16.8-10.
6 Ps. 18.7.
7 Ps. 18.6,7.

Sermon 193

(1) When the Gospel was read today, we heard the words of the angels through which the birth of Jesus Christ of the Virgin Mary was announced to the shepherds; 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will.'[1] It was a jubilant and congratulatory message, not only for the one woman whose womb had given us this offspring, but for the whole human race for which the Virgin had brought forth a Saviour. For it was fitting and proper that, instead of insignificant women with kindly services, angels with divine praises should do honor to the parturition of her who had brought forth the Lord of heaven and earth and who had remained inviolate after childbirth. Let us, then, who do not announce His birth to shepherds of flocks, but who celebrate it with His sheep, sing with as much jubilation as possible, with faithful heart and devoted voice: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will.' Let us consider in faith and hope and love these divine words, these praises of God, this angelic jubilation, this whole scene viewed with all possible profundity of thought. For, in proportion as we believe and hope and desire, we, too, shall be a source of additional glory to God in the highest when, after the resurrection of our spiritual body, we shall be lifted up in the clouds to meet Christ,[2] on condition, of course, that we work for peace with good will while we are here on earth. This life is in the heavens because that is the abode of the living, and, wherever the Lord Himself is, there are good days and years without end. If any person desires this life and longs to see these good days, let him restrain his tongue from evil and his lips from deceit; let him turn from evil and do good; let him thus be a man of good will. Let him 'seek after peace and pursue

1 Luke 2.14.
2 Cf. 1 Thess. 4.17.

it,'[3] because 'peace on earth [is] among men of good will.'

(2) But, O man, if you say: 'Behold, to wish is within my power, but I do not find the strength to accomplish what is good'; if you are delighted 'with the law of God according to the inner man, but [you] see another law in [your] members, warring against the law of [your] mind and making [you] prisoner to the law of sin that is in [your] members,' hold fast to your good will and cry out in the following words of the Apostle: 'Unhappy man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.'[4] For He is 'peace on earth among men of good will,' coming after the war in which 'the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; . . . so that you do not do what you would,' since 'he himself is our peace, he it is who has made both one.'[5] Therefore, let your good will hold fast against evil desires and, in its faithful endurance, let it beg for the help of the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Though the law of its carnal members resists it and even overcomes it, let your good will implore this help; let it not trust in its own strength; let it, even in its weariness, not refuse to give praise. For He will be at hand to say to those whom He has seen trusting in Him: 'If you abide in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'[6] He will be at hand, and His truth will free you from the body of this death. It is on that account that Truth, whose birthday we are celebrating, 'sprang forth from the earth'[7] that peace might be on earth among men of good will. For, who is capable of wishing and of accomplishing what he wishes unless helped in the accomplishment by the inspiration of Him who, in calling us into being, gave us the power to wish? Everywhere His mercy anticipates

3 Cf. Ps. 33.15; I Peter 3.10.
4 Cf. Rom. 7.18-25.
5 Gal. 5.17-19; Eph. 2.14.
6 John 8.31-33.
7 Cf. Ps. 84.12.

our need so that we, who did not wish it, were called and now have the power of being able to do what we desire. Therefore, let us say to Him: 'I have sworn and am determined to keep the judgments of thy justice.'[8] I am determined, indeed, and because Thou hast commanded it, I have promised to obey. However, since I 'see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and making me prisoner to the law of sin that is in my members,' on that account 'I have been humbled, O Lord, exceedingly: quicken thou me according to thy word.'[9] For 'to wish is within my power'; therefore, 'the free offerings of my mouth make acceptable, O Lord,'[10] so that peace may be produced on earth among men of good will. Let us voice these words and any others which piety instructed by good reading may suggest, so that we may worthily celebrate the feast of the Lord who was born of the Virgin, beginning with good will and accomplishing it with the utmost charity poured forth in our hearts, not through our own efforts, but 'by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.'[11]

Sermon 194

(1) Hear, O sons of light, who have been received by adoption into the kingdom of God; hear, my very dear brethren; hear and be glad in the Lord, ye just ones, so that praise may become the upright.[1] Hear what you already know; reflect upon what you have heard; love what you believe; proclaim what you love. Since we are celebrating a great anniversary on this day, you may expect a sermon in keeping with the feast. Christ as God was born of His Father,

8 Ps. 118.106.
9 Rom. 7.23; Ps. 118.107.
10 Rom. 7.18; Ps. 118.108.
11 Rom. 5.5.

1 Cf. Ps. 32.1.

as Man of His Mother; of the immortality of His Father, of the virginity of His Mother; of His Father without a mother, of His Mother without a father; of His Father without limits of time, of His Mother without seed; of His Father as the source of life, of His Mother as the end of death; of His Father ordering all days, of His Mother consecrating this particular day.[2]

(2) God sent John to earth as His human Precursor so that he was born when the days were becoming shorter while the Lord Himself was born when the days were growing longer, that in this minute detail the subsequent words of this same John might be prefigured: 'He must increase, but I must decrease.'[3] For human life ought to grow weaker in itself and stronger in Christ, that 'they who are alive may live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for all and rose again,' and that each one of us may say in the words of the Apostle: 'It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me.'[4] For 'he must increase, but I must decrease.'

All His angels worthily praise Him, for He is their everlasting food, nourishing them with an incorruptible feast. He is the Word of God, by whose life they live, by whose eternity they live forever, by whose goodness they live happily forever. They praise Him worthily, as God with God, and they render glory to God on high. May we, 'his people and the sheep of his hand,'[5] reconciled to Him by our good will, merit peace in consideration of the limited measure of our weakness. For these words to which the angels themselves gave utterance in jubilation at the birth of our Saviour are their daily tribute: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will.'[6] Therefore, they praise Him duly; let us praise

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2 The Louvain manuscript adds a lengthy passage here which, though pertinent in content, is Augustinian neither in vocabulary nor in style. Cassian, in *De Incarnatione* 7, assigns the passage, with apparent justification, to St. Ambrose or to one of the Ambrosian School. However, the unusual brevity of this first section and the abruptness of the transition to the second seem to indicate some sort of lacuna.

3 John 3.30.

4 Cf. 2 Cor. 5.15; Gal. 2.20.

5 Cf. Ps. 94.7.

6 Luke 2.14.

Him in obedience. They are His messengers; we, His sheep. He filled their table in heaven; He filled our manger on earth. He is the fullness of their table because 'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God.' He is the fullness of our manger because 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'[7] So that man might eat the Bread of angels the Creator of the angels became man. The angels praise Him by living; we, by believing; they by enjoying, we by seeking; they by obtaining, we by striving to obtain; they by entering, we by knocking.

(3) What human being could know all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ and concealed under the poverty of His humanity? For, 'being rich, he became poor for our sake that by his poverty we might become rich.'[8] When He assumed our mortality and overcame death, He manifested Himself in poverty, but He promised riches though they might be deferred; He did not lose them as if they were taken from Him. How great is the multitude of His sweetness which He hides from those who fear Him but which He reveals to those that hope in Him![9] For we understand only in part until that which is perfect comes to us. To make us worthy of this perfect gift, He, equal to the Father in the form of God, became like to us in the form of a servant, and refashions us into the likeness of God. The only Son of God, having become the Son of Man, makes many sons of men the sons of God; and on these men, reared as servants, with the visible form of servants, He bestows the freedom of beholding the form of God. For 'we are the children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when he appears, we shall be like to him, for we shall see him just as he is.'[10] What, then, are those treasures of wisdom and knowledge? What are those divine riches unless they be that which satisfies our longing? And what is that multitude of sweetness unless it be what fills us?

7 John 1.1,14.
8 Cf. 2 Cor. 8.9.
9 Cf. Ps. 30.20.
10 1 John 3.2.

'Show us the Father and it is enough for us.'[11] Furthermore, in one of the psalms, one of our race, either in our name or for our sake, said to Him: 'I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear.'[12] But He and the Father are one, and the person who sees Him sees the Father also;[13] therefore, 'the Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory.'[14] Turning to us, He will show us His face and 'we shall be saved';[15] we shall be satisfied, and He will be sufficient for us.

(4) Therefore, let our heart speak thus to Him; 'I have sought thy countenance; thy face, O Lord, will I still seek. Turn not away thy face from me.'[16] And let Him reply to the plea of our hearts: 'He who loves me keeps my commandments; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.'[17] Indeed, those to whom He addressed these words did see Him with their eyes; they heard the sound of His voice with their ears; they regarded Him as a man in their human heart. But, what eye has not seen, what ear has not heard, and what has not entered into the heart of man He promised to show to those who love Him.[18] Until this favor is granted to us, until He shows us what will completely satisfy us, until we drink to satiety of that fountain of life, while we wander about, apart from Him but strong in faith, while we hunger and thirst for justice, longing with an unspeakable desire for the beautiful vision of God, let us celebrate with fervent devotion His birthday in the form of a servant. Since we cannot, as yet, understand that He was begotten by the Father before the day-star, let us celebrate His birth of the Virgin in the nocturnal hours. Since we do not comprehend how His name existed before the light of the sun, let us

11 John 14.8.
12 Ps. 16.15.
13 Cf. John 10.30; 14.9.
14 Ps. 23.10.
15 Cf. Ps. 79.4.
16 Cf. Ps. 26.8-10.
17 Cf. John 14.21.
18 Cf. 1 Cor. 2.9.

recognize His tabernacle placed in the sun. Since we do not, as yet, gaze upon the Son inseparably united with His Father, let us remember Him as the 'bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber.'[19] Since we are not yet ready for the banquet of our Father, let us grow familiar with the manger of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sermon 195

(1) Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is likewise the Son of Man. Born of the Father without a mother, He created every day; born of His Mother, without a father, He consecrated this day; invisible in His divine nativity, visible in His human birth, marvelous in both. Hence, it is difficult to determine to which birth the Prophet referred when he said: 'Who shall declare his generation?'[1] It is difficult to judge whether Isaias spoke of that nativity whereby, though never unborn, He had a co-eternal Father, or that whereby He was born in time of the Mother whom He had already made; or whether Isaias meant that nativity whereby He was always born since He always existed. For who will declare how Light is born of Light and how both constitute but one Light; how God is born of God without increasing the number of gods; how the statement is made that He was born, as if one were speaking of an accomplished event when, in that nativity, time neither elapsed, becoming past; nor progressed, becoming future; nor was it present as though it were being made up to that moment and was not yet completed? Therefore, who shall declare this generation when what is to be declared remains superior to the limits of time, while the speech of the one who makes the declaration passes in time? And who will declare that

19 Cf. Ps. 71.17; 18.6.

1 Isa. 53.8.

other generation of the Virgin, in which conception took place without seed and in which parturition brought fullness to her when she nourished but did not deprive her of integrity when she gave birth? 'Who shall declare his generation' in either or both of these nativities?

(2) This is the Lord our God; this Man, our Saviour, is the mediator between God and man. Born of the Father, He created His Mother; formed as Man in His Mother, He glorified His Father. He is the only Son of the Father without woman's parturition; the only Son of His Mother, without man's co-operation. Surpassing all the sons of men in beauty,[2] He, the Son of holy Mary and the Spouse of holy Church, has made the Church like to His Mother, since He made it a mother for us and He kept it a virgin for Himself. To the same Church the Apostle says: 'For I have betrothed you to one spouse, that I might present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' Elsewhere he says that our mother is not a handmaid but free, and that the children of the desolate are more numerous than of the one who has a husband.[3] The Church, then, like Mary, has inviolate integrity and incorrupt fecundity. What Mary merited physically, the Church has guarded spiritually, with the exception that Mary brought forth one Child, while the Church has many children destined to be gathered into one body by One.

(3) This is the day on which He by whom the world was made came into the world; it is the day He became present in the flesh although He was never absent in spirit; He was in this world and He came unto His own; He was in the world but He passed without notice because the light shone 'in the darkness and the darkness grasped it not.'[4] Therefore, He came in the flesh intending to cleanse the vices of the flesh. He came, clothed in healing human clay, to cure our interior eyes which our outer earthy vesture had blinded, so that, with soundness of vision restored, we who had before

2 Cf. Ps. 44.3.
3 2 Cor. 11.2; cf. Gal. 4.26-28.
4 Cf. John 1.10-12,5.

been darkness might become a shining light in the Lord,[5] and so that the Light might no longer shine in darkness but might be clearly envisaged by those perceiving it. For this purpose, He came forth as a bridegroom from His bride-chamber and 'hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way.'[6] Comely as a bridegroom, strong as a giant; amiable and terrible, severe and serene; beautiful to the good, stern to the evil—remaining in the bosom of His Father, He took possession of the womb of His Mother. In this bride-chamber, that is, in the womb of the Virgin, He united human to divine nature. The Word was made flesh for us so that, coming forth from His Mother, He might dwell among us[7] and so that, going forth to His Father, He might prepare a dwelling place for us. Therefore, let us joyfully and solemnly celebrate this day; let us earnestly desire the Eternal Day through Him who, though eternal Himself, was born in time for us.

Sermon 196

(1) Today, the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ has dawned in festive splendor for us. It is His birthday, the day on which the Eternal Day was born. And hence it is this day because from this day forward the length of the day increases. Our Lord had two nativities: one divine, the other, human; both marvelous; the one without a woman as mother, the other without a man as father. Hence, the words of the Prophet Isaias may be applied to both generations: 'Who shall declare his generation?[1] Who would worthily tell of a God generating [His Son]? Who would worthily relate the parturition of a virgin? The former generation

5 Cf. Eph. 5.8.
6 Ps. 18.6.
7 Cf. John 1.14.

1 Isa. 53.8.

took place without the limits of time; the latter, on a definite day in time. Both happened without human calculation, and both are viewed with intense admiration. Consider that first generation: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God.'[2] Whose Word? That of the Father Himself. What Word? The Son Himself. Never did the Father exist without the Son, yet He who was never without the Son generated that Son. He generated Him, yet the Son had no beginning, for there is no beginning for Him who was generated without beginning. Nevertheless, He is the Son and He was generated. Someone is going to say: 'How was He generated if He had no beginning? If He was generated, He has a beginning; if he has no beginning, then, how was He generated?' I do not know how this happened. Do you ask me, a mere man, how God was generated? I am troubled by your question, but I have recourse to the words of the Prophet: 'Who shall declare his generation?' Come with me to [a consideration of] that human generation; come with me to that in which He 'emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave,'[3] come, to see if we can comprehend it, to see if we can speak about it. For who would grasp the significance of: 'Who though He was by nature God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be clung to'?[4] Who would understand that? Who would worthily ponder it? Whose mind would dare to investigate it? Whose tongue would have the temerity to utter a decision concerning it? Whose thought can encompass it? Meanwhile, let us lay aside this problem as being too weighty for us. But, so that it would not be too weighty for us, He 'emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave and being made like unto men.' Where? In the Virgin Mary. Then, let us say something if we have any power of utterance. The angel announces; the Virgin hears, believes, conceives, faith in her

2 John 1.1.
3 Phil. 2.7.
4 Phil. 2.6.

mind, Christ in her womb. A virgin has conceived—you are amazed; a virgin has brought forth a child—you are more amazed; after childbirth she has remained a virgin—therefore 'Who shall declare his generation?'

(2) I am going to say something that will please you, my very dear brethren. There are three states of life pursued by the members of the Church of Christ: marriage, widowhood, and virginity. Because those states, those different manifestations of purity, were destined to be found in the holy members of Christ, all three states of life gave witness to Christ. In the first place, the conjugal state bore this witness, for, when the Virgin Mary conceived, Elizabeth, the wife of Zachary, having already conceived, bore in her womb the herald of this Judge. Holy Mary came to Elizabeth to greet her cousin. Thereupon, the infant in Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy. He exulted; she prophesied.[5] Here you have conjugal purity bearing witness to Christ. Where did the state of widowhood bear such witness? In the case of Anna. When the Gospel was read recently, you heard that Anna was a holy widow with prophetic powers who, having lived seven of her eighty-four years with her husband, was constantly in the Temple, worshiping in prayer both night and day. She, a widow, recognized Christ. She saw a tiny babe; she recognized the great God and she bore Him witness.[6] You have, then, in her an illustration of the state of widowhood. In Mary herself we have an illustration of the virginal state. Let each one choose for himself which of these three states he will. Whoever has elected to live outside these states does not make provision for his inclusion in the members of Christ. Let not those women who are married say: 'We do not belong to Christ,' for holy women have had husbands. Let not those women who are virgins boast; let them, rather, humble themselves in all things in proportion to their great-

5 Cf. Luke 1.39-56.
6 Cf. Luke 2.36-39.

ness.[7] You have all the instances of sanctification set before your eyes. Let no one turn aside from these bounds. Let no one turn away from his wife; it is better to be without a wife. If you seek conjugal chastity, you have Susanna; if chastity of widowhood, you have Anna; if virginity, you have Mary.

(3) The Lord Jesus wished to become man for our sake. Wisdom lies upon this earth; let not His mercy become worthless. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God.' O Food and Bread of angels! The angels are filled by Thee; they are sated, yet they do not draw away from Thee. They live by Thee; they are wise in Thee; they are happy because of Thee. And where art Thou for my sake? In a narrow dwelling, in swaddling clothes, in a manger. For whom [dost Thou endure] all this? He who guides the stars is nourished at the breast, but He fills the angels; He speaks in the bosom of the Father, but He is silent in the womb of His Mother. As He advances in age, however, He will speak to us; He will finish the Gospel for us. For us He will suffer and die; He will rise again in token of our reward; He will ascend into heaven before the eyes of His disciples; He will come to the judgment from heaven. Behold, He who lay in the manger demeaned but did not destroy Himself; He took upon Himself what He was not but He remained what He was. Behold, we have the Infant Christ; let us grow up in Him.

(4) Let these thoughts be sufficient for your Charity, because it is fitting for me to say something to the crowds whom I see gathered here for the feast. The first of January is near at hand. You are all Christians;[8] by the grace of God, the

7 Cf. Eccli. 3.20.

8 Because of this statement some persons question whether St. Augustine was the author of this sermon on the grounds that he certainly would know that there were Manichaeans, Donatists, and other heretics at Hippo in his day. However, since the term 'Catholic' is not used, and since St. Augustine in various places includes Manichaeans and Donatists among Christians, the objection seems to lack support.

state is Christian although there are two classes of people in it, that is, Christians and Jews. Let not those things be done which God hates: injustice in games, wickedness in jest. Let not men make themselves judges, lest they fall into the hands of the true Judge. Hearken, O Christians, you are the members of Christ. Consider what you are; ponder at what price you have been bought. Finally, if you wish to know what you are doing, I address myself to those who are doing evil. I beg you, to whom those actions are now displeasing, not to repeat them to your own harm. And I speak to those who still do wrong and take pleasure in it. Do you wish to know what you are doing and what great sorrow you are bringing upon us? The Jews do that. I beg you to be too ashamed to do so. On the birthday of John the Baptist six months ago (for the two birthdays—of the herald and of the Judge—are six months apart), in celebration of a pagan superstition, Christians came to the sea and there they baptized themselves. I was absent, but I later learned that, in accordance with the instructions of the Christians, the priests, being disturbed, inflicted a well-deserved ecclesiastical chastisement on certain individuals. Then some of these men murmured and said: 'What great crime was committed that it should be reported against us? If we had been instructed, we would not have done it. If the priests had forewarned us, we would not have acted thus.' Listen, your bishop now forewarns you. I admonish you; I tell you in public; I threaten you. May you hearken to your bishop when he gives a command; may you hearken when he admonishes you; may you hearken when he begs you; may you hearken when he implores you. I swear by Him who was born today; I adjure you; I constrain you; let no one do this evil. I absolve myself from blame. It is better for me to be heard warning you than to feel compunction.

FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY

Sermon 197[1]

Against the Pagans, on the First of January

'THE WRATH OF God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness.' Whose ungodliness, if not that of the Jews and Gentiles? Lest any one should object, saying: 'Why against the ungodliness of the Gentiles? The Gentiles have never received the Law and have they become transgressors? The wrath of God is rightly directed at the Jews, since the Law was given to them and they have refused to observe it. But it was not given to the Gentiles [I give my answer]. Consider the passage, my brethren, and understand that the Apostle declares that all men are indicted, that all need the salvation and mercy of the Lord. 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those men who in wickedness hold back the truth of God.' Note that he does not say: 'who do not possess the truth,' but 'who in wickedness hold back the truth.' And, as though he anticipated your question: 'How can they, who have not received the Law, possess the truth?' he continues: 'seeing that what may be known about God is manifest to them.' And how could that which may be

1 This sermon and the following are poorly organized and seem rather fragmentary, yet the style is that of St. Augustine.

known about God be manifest to those who have not received the Law? He goes on to say: 'For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes are clearly seen—his everlasting power also and divinity—being understood through the things that are made.' As we listen, the passage,[2] now understood, becomes clear. For why would one notice works and not seek the Workman? You direct your attention to the productive soil; you see the water full of its aquatic animals; you note that the air is beaten by winged creatures; you gaze at the heavens studded with stars; finally, you notice other manifestations of power—and do you not seek the Maker of so glorious a creation? But you say to me: 'I see these visible works; I do not see the Maker.' But God gave you your bodily eyes to see His works and your mind to see Him. Neither do you see the soul of man. Therefore, as you recognize the existence of the soul, which you do not see, from the movements and management of the body, so from the management of those very souls and from the administration of the whole world recognize the Creator.

However, it is not enough to understand. For those persons understood, of whom the Apostle says: 'Although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks, but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless minds have been darkened.' By what fault [did this happen] except that of pride? For see the next passage: 'While professing to be wise, they have become fools.' They should not have arrogated to themselves what He had given them, nor should they have vaunted what they possessed, not from their own efforts, but from Him. This acknowledgment ought to have been given to God in order that, to possess what they could see, they might be healed by Him who had granted them the power to see. If they would act thus they would safeguard humility, they would make their exoneration possible,

2 The entire passage is Rom. 1.18-25.

and they would live in harmony with that most blessed contemplation. But because they were proud, a false, deceptive, and haughty spirit interposed itself and, promising that their souls would be cleansed through some measures agreeable to their pride, made them worshipers of demons. Hence came all those sacred rites which are celebrated by the pagans and which they say are sufficient to cleanse their souls.

Hear what the Apostle says in regard to the people who have received these evils as a reward of their pride. Because they have not honored God as He deserves to be honored, St. Paul says: 'They have changed the glory of the incorruptible God for an image made like to corruptible man.' Now, those images are statues and such objects bearing the likeness of man which are possessed by all the Greeks and other nations. In truth, there is no greater or more superstitious idolatry than that of the Egyptians, for Egypt has flooded the world with such statues as the Apostle mentions when to the words, 'for an image made like to corruptible man,' he adds 'and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.' My brethren, have you ever seen in the temples an image with the head of a dog or bull, and the representations of other irrational animals? These are the idols of the Egyptians. Referring to both kinds of images, the Apostle says: 'an image made like to corruptible man and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things. Therefore God has given them up in the lustful desires of their heart to uncleanness, so that they dishonor their own bodies among themselves.' These evils arise from the ungodliness of pride. Moreover, because these sins originate in pride, they are not only sins but punishments. For, when the Apostle says: 'God has given them up,' there is already question of vengeance in the fact that they perpetrate these evils. 'They who exchanged the truth of God for a lie.' What does this mean: 'They exchanged the truth of God for a lie'? Obviously, it means they substituted the 'image made like to corruptible man and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.'

Lest any one of his hearers should say: 'I do not worship the image but what the images signify,' St. Paul adds immediately: 'and they worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.' Understand this well. They are worshiping an image or a creature. He who worships an image exchanges the truth of God for a lie. For, the sea is a truth, but Neptune is a lie fabricated by man when the truth of God was exchanged for a lie, because God made the sea, whereas man made the image of Neptune. Likewise, God made the sun, but man, by fashioning an image of the sun, exchanges the truth of God for a lie. Hence, lest these people should say: 'I do not worship an image; I worship the sun,' the Apostle continued: 'They worshiped . . . the creature rather than the Creator.'

But, perhaps, some one will say: 'Although the Lord Himself was born in lowly circumstances, He wished to make much of the nobility of His disciples.' He did not choose kings or senators or philosophers or orators; on the contrary, He selected common people, the poor, the unlearned, fishermen. Although Cyprian was an orator, Peter was a fisherman. If the fisherman had not come first in all fidelity, the orator would not have followed in all humility. Let no lowly person despair; let him hold fast to Christ and his hope will not go unrewarded.

What was it that Simon desired except to be praised because of the miraculous power [which he coveted] and to be lifted up in the pride which impelled him to think that the gift of the Holy Spirit could be bought with gold?[3] In opposition to this pride the Apostle, by persevering in his humility, although glowing with zeal [like the sun] at midday and shining as a light by his prudence, said:[4] 'Neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the growth.' He had previously stated: 'I have planted, Apollos watered, but God has given the growth,' and in

3 Cf. Acts 8.18.
4 1 Cor. 3.7,6; 1.13.

another passage: 'Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?' See how he shrinks from being esteemed in place of Christ and how averse he is to appear as a spouse to an unfaithful soul! Does it not seem great to plant and to water? Nevertheless, he says: 'Neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters.' What did he fear when he said that his efforts were as nothing in promoting the salvation of those whom he desired to build up in Christ?

The Apostle wished the hope of his hearers to be centered, not in himself, but in the truth which he was presenting. What was being brought to them through his instrumentality was better than he through whom it was being presented. He says: 'Even if we, 'and, as if that were not strong enough, hear his subsequent words: 'or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you other than that which you have received, let him be anathema.'[5] For he envisaged the possibility of a false messenger transforming himself into an angel of light and announcing a false message. Therefore, just as proud men wish to be adored as God, to arrogate to themselves whatever credit they can get, to be spoken highly of, and, if possible, to surpass Christ Himself in glory, so the Devil and his angels do likewise. The Donatists[6] consider

5 Cf. Gal. 1.8.

6 The Donatists were a schismatical sect that came into existence in Northern Africa in the wake of the persecution of Diocletian, when certain rigorists claimed that the validity of the sacraments depended on the moral character of the minister, and that sinners could not be members of the Church. This conflict between the intransigence of the Northern Africans and the wisdom and moderation of the Church of Christ was precipitated by the refusal of Donatus, Bishop of Carthage, to recognize the consecration of a fellow bishop, Caecilian, on the grounds that it had been conferred by a bishop who, during the persecution, had handed the Scriptures to the pagans, thus committing a grievous sin. The Donatists, as they were called, were opposed by Pope Miltiades in 313, by the bishops assembled in the Council of Arles in 314, and by Emperor Constantine the Great in 316. Nevertheless, the sect continued to spread throughout Northern Africa until the advent of St. Augustine, who combatted it over a period of twenty years. Through his efforts a conference was held at Carthage

Donatus as Christ. If they should hear a pagan slandering Christ, they would very likely bear it more patiently than if they heard like abuse of Donatus.

Because Christ Himself speaks in his holy ones, the Apostle says:[7] 'Do you seek a proof of the Christ who speaks in me?' And although he says: 'Neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters; but God who gives the growth,' because he wished God to be loved in him and not himself, nevertheless he acknowledges the services of certain Galatians in the words: 'You received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.' Hence, in all His saints is He to be cherished who says: 'I was hungry and you gave me to eat.'[8] He does not say 'You gave them to eat,' but 'You gave me to eat.' Such is the love of the Head for His Body!

What is Juno? 'Juno,' they answer, 'is the air.' For a long time [paganism] has called upon us to worship the sea under an earthy representation; now we are summoned to worship the air. They are merely the elements of which this world consists. Therefore, the Apostle Paul in his Epistle says: 'See to it that no one deceives you by philosophy and vain deceit. . . . according to the elements of the world.'[9] Here he refers to those who set forth idols to presumably intellectual persons. Hence, when he says 'philosophy,' he adds directly, 'according to the elements of the world,' giving warning that the faithful should be on their guard against certain persons, not so much as the worshipers of idols, but as the learned interpreters of signs.

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in 411, at which the Donatists were confounded. Their churches were then seized and those who refused to abjure their error were exiled. Cf. P. Amann, *The Church of the Early Centuries* (St. Louis 1930) 134-138, 180-184.

7 2 Cor. 13.3; 1 Cor. 3.7; Gal. 4.14.

8 Matt. 25.35.

9 Col. 2.8.

Sermon 198

(1) My brethren, seeing that you have gathered together today as for a solemn feast and that you have come in greater numbers than usual, I admonish you in your devotedness to remember what you have just sung so that your voice may not resound while your heart is silent, but, rather, that what you have uttered for one another's ears may reach the ears of God. For this is what you sang: 'Save us, O Lord our God: and gather us from among the nations: that we may give thanks to Thy holy name.'[1] Now, if this feast of the pagans which is celebrated today with such joy of the world and of the flesh, with the singing of meaningless and base songs, with banquets and shameful dances, if these things which the pagans do in the celebration of this false festival do not please you, then you shall be gathered from among the nations.

(2) Yes, indeed, you have sung this psalm and its echo is still sounding in our ears: 'Save us, O Lord our God: and gather us from among the nations.' Who can be gathered from among the nations without being saved? Therefore, those who are intermingled with the pagans are not saved; those are saved who are gathered from among them, in the salvation of faith, in the salvation of the spirit, in the salvation of the promises of God. Hence, he who believes, hopes, and loves must not, on that account, be assured of salvation. For what he believes, what he hopes, and what he loves make a difference. No one lives in any type of life without those three movements of the soul, that is, of believing, hoping, loving. If you do not believe what the pagans believe, if you do not hope for what they hope for, if you do not love what they love, then you are gathered from among the pagans; you are removed from them; that is, you are separated from the nations. Let not mere physical association alarm you when you are separated in mind. For what greater

1 Ps. 105.47.

separation can there be than that they believe in demons as gods while you believe in Him who is the one and true God; that they hope in the vanities of this passing age but you, in eternal life with Christ; that they love this world but you, the Creator of the world? Let him, therefore, who believes, hopes, and loves something other than these people prove it by his life and show it by his deeds. Are you going to take part in a celebration of the New Year? Are you, just like a pagan, going to play dice and become intoxicated when you believe, hope, and love otherwise? How can you then sing with an open countenance: 'Save us, O Lord our God: and gather us from among the nations'?

For you are segregated from the pagans; associated with them physically, you are unlike them in your way of life. See how marked this separation is if only you make it so, if only you prove it. For our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became Man for our sake, paid a price for us. He gave Himself as a price and He did so for this purpose, namely, to redeem and to separate you from the pagans. But, if you wish to intermingle with the pagans, you do not wish to follow Him who redeemed you. Moreover, you intermingle with the pagans in your life, your deeds, your heart, by believing, hoping, and loving as they do. Then you are ungrateful to your Redeemer; you do not appreciate your purchase price, the blood of the Immaculate Lamb. Therefore, in order to follow your Redeemer, who bought you back with His own blood, do not mix with the pagans by aping their customs and deeds. When they give gifts; do you give alms. They are called away by songs of license; you, by the discourses of the Scriptures. They run to the theatre; you, to the church. They become intoxicated; do you fast. If you are not able to fast today, at least dine with moderation. If you have acted thus, then you have rightly sung: 'Save us, O Lord our God: and gather us from among the nations.'

(3) Many will wrestle in their hearts today with the word which they have heard, for I said: 'Do not give gifts, but

give to the poor.' It is not enough merely to give—you should give generously. Do you not wish to give more? Well, just give. But you object: 'When I give New Year's gifts, I myself give to myself.' What then? Do you receive nothing when you give to the poor? You surely would not believe what the pagans believe; you surely would not hope for what the pagans hope for. But if you say that you get nothing when you have given to the poor, you have become one of the pagans and without justification you have sung: 'Save us, O Lord our God: and gather us from among the nations.' Do not be unmindful of that passage which says: 'He that giveth to the poor shall not want.'[2] Have you already forgotten what the Lord is going to say to those who have given alms to the poor: 'Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the Kingdom,' and what He will say to those who have not given alms: 'Cast them into everlasting fire'?[3] Here at this moment, those who gladly heard what the Lord said are standing with those who were not so glad to hear it.

Now, I speak to the true Christians. If you believe, hope, and love otherwise [than the pagans do], then live otherwise and gain approval for your distinctive faith, hope, and charity by distinctive actions. Hearken to the Apostle when, in earnest admonition, he says: 'Do not bear the yoke with unbelievers. For what has justice in common with iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? . . . Or what part has the believer with the unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?'[4] Elsewhere he also says: 'What the pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God; and I would not have you become associates of devils.'[5] The customs [of the pagans] delight their gods. However, he who said 'I would not have you become associates of devils' wished his hearers to be separated in their way of

2 Prov. 28.27.
3 Matt. 25.34; cf. 25.41.
4 2 Cor. 6.14-16.
5 1 Cor. 10.20.

life and in morals from those who served demons. For such demons are pleased with misleading songs, with worthless shows, with the varied foulness of the theatre, with the frenzy of the games, with the cruelty of the amphitheatre, with the violent contests of those who undertake strife and controversy provocative even of hostility in their support of noxious characters, for instance, of an actor in a mime, a play, or a pantomime, of a charioteer, or of a hunter. By acting in this way they, as it were, offer incense to the demons within their hearts. For the deceptive spirits rejoice in seduction; they feast upon the evil customs and the notoriously vile life of those whom they have misled and entrapped. 'But you,' says the Apostle, 'have not so learned Christ—for surely you have heard of him and have been taught in him.' 'Do not, then, become partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk, then, as children of light,'[6] so that we, too, who preach the word of the Lord to you, may with you and because of you rejoice in perpetual light.

6 Eph. 4.21; 5.7-9.

FOR THE EPIPHANY

Sermon 199

On the Epiphany of the Lord

(1) Recently we celebrated the day on which Christ was born among the Jews; today we celebrate the day on which He was adored by the Gentiles. 'For salvation is from the Jews,' but this salvation is 'even to the farthest part of the earth.'[1] For, on that day shepherds adored; on this day, Magi. To the former, angels made the announcement; a star brought the good tidings to the latter. Both groups were enlightened from heaven so that, when they saw the King of heaven on earth, there might be 'glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will.'[2] 'For he himself is our peace, he it is who has made both one.'[3] To the one group, the Infant at birth is shown as the chief cornerstone announced by the Prophet;[4] to the other group He is manifested at the very outset of His career. He has already begun to weld together in Himself the two walls originally set in different directions, bringing shepherds from Judea and Magi from the East so 'that of the two he

1 John 4.22; Isa. 49.6.
2 Luke 2.14.
3 Eph. 2.14.
4 Cf. Isa. 28.16.

might create in himself a new man, and make peace . . . peace to those who were afar off, and peace to those who were near.'[5] Hence, though the shepherds coming from near at hand on the very day of His birth and the Magi coming from afar on this day have marked two days as worthy of commemoration by posterity, they both saw the one and only Light of the world.

On this day, however, we must pay tribute to those men whom faith led to Christ from far distant regions. They came in search of Him, saying: 'Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him.'[6] They announce and they question; they believe and they seek, as it were, foreshadowing those who walk in faith and who long for reality. Were not other kings of the Jews born at various other times in Judea? Why is it that strangers recognize this King by a sign in the heavens and seek Him on earth; that He is resplendent on high, though here He lies in a lowly bed? The Magi see a star in the East and they know that a King has been born in Judea. Who is that King, so small and so mighty, not yet speaking on earth and already issuing commands in heaven? In truth [He did this] for us, in His desire that we might learn about Him from the sacred Scriptures, and for the Magi, that they might believe in Him from His prophecies even though He had given them so bright a sign in the heavens and had revealed to their hearts that He was born in Judea. For, in seeking the place where He whom they desired to see and to adore was born, they had to contact the leaders of the Jews, so that these unfaithful men, wittingly deceptive but unwittingly truthful, might give evidence to the faithful about the grace of faith, evidence drawn from holy Scripture which they carried on their lips but not in their hearts. How wonderful it would have been if these leaders of the Jews, when they had heard from the Magi

5 Cf. Eph. 2.14-20.
6 Matt. 2.2.

that under the guidance of the star they had come desiring to adore Him, had associated themselves with the searchers for Christ, had led them to Bethlehem, which they had pointed out from the sacred books, and had seen, understood, and adored Him along with them? Instead, after directing others to the fountain of life, they preferred to die of thirst. They became, as it were, milestones to these strangers; they indicated the path to the travelers but they remained motionless and immovable. The Magi sought in order to find; Herod sought only to destroy. The Jews read the name of the city of His birth, but did not know the time of His coming. Confronted with the devoted love of the Magi and the cruel fear of Herod, the Jews, having pointed out Bethlehem, withdrew. Nevertheless, they would later deny the Christ who has born there, whom they did not seek at His birth, but whom they afterwards saw; they would kill Him, not as an infant, but later when they had heard Him speak. Happier far the ignorance of the babes whom Herod in his terror persecuted than the knowledge of those whom he in his anxiety consulted. Children not yet capable of confessing Christ could suffer for Him; they who could point out the city of His birth did not follow the truth enunciated by Him as a teacher.

(2) A star led the Magi to the exact spot where God the Word was born. Here may confusion overtake that impious ignorance and, if I may use the expression, that unlearned learning, which considers that Christ was born in accordance with the movements of the stars because it is written in the Gospel that the Magi saw His star in the East when He was born. This would not be true even if the birth of men were determined by a decree of this sort, because men are not born of their own will as was the Son of God, but by a condition imposed by their mortal nature. Moreover, so far from the truth is this statement that the birth of Christ was determined by the course of the stars that anyone who really believes in Christ is convinced that no man is born in this

fashion. Let deluded men say what their ignorance fabricates about the birth of men; let them deny the free will by which they sin and invent the existence of a driving force by which they defend their sins; let them attempt to trace to the heavens the vicious traits which cause them to be scorned even on earth by their fellow men, and let them untruthfully say that these traits originate in the heavens. Let each one who is so minded not only see how his own life will have to be regulated but let him consider how his household is going to be ruled, since, by subscribing to these opinions, he is not permitted to punish his own servants who do wrong in his house without first being obliged to blaspheme his gods resplendent in the heavens. Nevertheless, these persons, in spite of their own senseless conjectures and in spite of their books, which, far from being prophetic, are definitely false, cannot believe that Christ's birth was determined by any astrological decree, because the Magi saw the star in the East only after Christ was born.

Hence, Christ appeared as the Master with power over the star rather than as one subject to its influence, since the star did not hold to the shining course of the other constellations in the heavens, but, to the persons seeking Christ, pointed out the path which led directly to the place where He had been born. Wherefore, the star itself did not, in wondrous fashion, cause Christ to live, but Christ, in wondrous wise, caused the star to appear; the star did not determine the marvels of Christ's birth, but Christ determined the appearance of the star among His other miracles. For He, born of the Father, had made heavens and earth; on being born of a Mother, He showed the earth a new constellation. When He was born, a new light was unveiled in a star; when He died, the ancient light of the sun was veiled. At His birth, the heavens became bright with new lustre; at His death, the lower regions trembled with new fear; at His Resurrection, the disciples burned with new love; at His Ascension, the heavens opened in a new act of homage. Let

us, then, celebrate with devout solemnity this day on which the Magi from pagan nations adored Him whom they acknowledged as Christ, just as we recently celebrated that other day on which shepherds from Judea saw that Christ had been born.[7] For our Lord God Himself chose as His Apostles shepherds from Judea, so that through their instrumentality He might gather into His fold the sinners who were to be saved from among the pagans.

Sermon 200

(1) Magi come from the East to adore the Virgin's Child. Today we celebrate this event; we pay our respects and deliver a sermon in keeping with the feast. This day first shone resplendently for the Magi; its anniversary is renewed by us with festal rejoicing. They were the first-fruits of the Gentiles; we are a nation of Gentiles. The words of Apostles announced His birth to us; a star was, as it were, the language of heaven for them; like the heavens, therefore, the Apostles announced the glory of God to us.[1] Why should we not recognize as heavens those who have become the abode of God, as it is written: 'The soul of the just is the seat of wisdom'?[2] For, through these heavens [the Apostles], the One who made and who dwells in the heavens has sounded forth. The earth trembled at the sound and now, behold, it believes. O mighty mystery! The Lord lay in a manger, yet He drew the Magi from the East. He was hidden in a stable, yet He was acknowledged in the heavens, so that, thus recognized in the heavens, He might be manifested in the stable and that this day might be called the Epiphany or, in the Latin derivative, the Manifestation. Thus, at one and the same time, He

7 Cf. Matt. 2.1-12; Luke 2.8-20.

1 Cf. Ps. 18.1.
2 Cf. Wisd. 7.

set His seal of approval on His high and His lowly estate, so that He to whom the heavens bore witness by a starry sign might, when sought, be found in an insignificant dwelling where, helpless in His tiny frame and wrapped in swaddling clothes, He might be adored by the Magi and feared by the wicked.

For King Herod feared the Infant Saviour when these same Magi announced to him that they were seeking the Child of whose birth they had learned through the testimony of the heavens. What will be the judgment seat of Him whose infant cradle so terrified haughty kings? How much more wisely kings now do not, like Herod, seek to kill Him, but, like the Magi, rather delight in adoring Him who, for His enemies and at the hands of His enemies, endured that very death which the hostile Herod desired to inflict upon Him and thus, by His own supreme sacrifice, vanquished death. Let kings now devoutly fear Him as He sits at the right hand of His Father, since that wicked king feared Him as a babe at the breast of His Mother. Let them hearken to the Scriptures: 'And now, O ye kings, understand: receive instruction, you that judge the earth. Serve ye the Lord with fear: and rejoice unto Him with trembling.'[3] For that King, the avenger of wicked kings and the ruler of the good, was not born as kings are born in this world. He was born as One whose kingdom is not of this world:[4] the nobility of the Child attested by the virginity of the Mother; the nobility of the Mother, by the divinity of her Child. Finally, although many kings of the Jews had previously been born and laid to rest, never before had Magi sought to adore any one of them, because they had not been apprised of the birth of any one of them by a heavenly message.

(2) Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of the fact that the enlightenment of the Magi bears definite witness to the blindness of the Jews. For it was in their land that the Magi

3 Ps. 2.10-12.
4 Cf. John 18.36.

sought Him whom the Jews did not recognize in their own land. The Magi found Him as a child among those who later denied Him when He taught in their midst. These strangers from afar adored the Infant Christ, when He was not yet capable of uttering a word, in the land where His own fellow citizens crucified Him as a young Man working miracles for them. The Magi recognized God in His tiny human frame; the Jews, notwithstanding His mighty deeds, did not spare Him as a Man, as if it were a greater thing to see a new star blaze forth at His birth than to witness the sun mourning at His death. Then, in truth, the star which had led the Magi to the country where the Infant God was with His Mother and which could likewise have guided them to the city itself, withdrew and did not appear again until the Jews had been questioned about the city in which Christ was born, so that they might be the ones to name it in accordance with the testimony of sacred Scripture: 'In Bethlehem, of Judea, for thus it is written . . . "And thou, Bethlehem, of the land of Juda, art by no means least among the princes of Juda; For out of thee shall come forth a leader who shall rule my people Israel." '[5] What else did Divine Providence indicate in this passage except that the sacred Scriptures would remain in the hands of the Jews so that by them the pagans might be enlightened and the Jews themselves blinded; that the Jews might bear them, not as a help in securing their own salvation, but as a testimony of ours? For, when we today bring forth the prophecies about Christ uttered in anticipation of His coming and now confirmed in the light of the accomplished facts, if, by chance, the pagans whom we wish to convert declare that the prophecies were not uttered so far in advance but were fabricated by us after the actual events, so that what really did happen might appear to have been prophesied, we read aloud the scrolls of the Jews to remove this doubt of the pagans. For they were prefigured by the Magi whom the Jews, by means

5 Matt. 2.5-7.

of their sacred writings, instructed about the city in which Christ was born, although they themselves neither sought nor acknowledged Him.

(3) Now, then, my dearly beloved sons and heirs of grace, look to your vocation and, since Christ has been revealed to both Jews and Gentiles as the cornerstone, cling together with most constant affection. For He was manifested in the very cradle of His infancy to those who were near and to those who were afar—to the Jews whose shepherds were nearby; to the Gentiles whose Magi were at a great distance. The former came to Him on the very day of His birth; the latter are believed to have come on this day. He was not revealed, therefore, to the shepherds because they were learned, nor to the Magi because they were righteous, for ignorance abounds in the rusticity of shepherds and impiety amid the sacrileges of the Magi. He, the cornerstone, joined both groups to Himself since He came to choose the foolish things of the world in order to put to shame the wise[6] and 'to call sinners, not the just,'[7] so that the mighty would not be lifted up nor the lowly be in despair.

Hence, the Scribes and Pharisees, while they seemed exceedingly wise and just in their own estimation, by reading the sacred words pointed out the city of the Child's birth, but in building they rejected Him. However, because He has 'become the head of the corner'[8] and because He fulfilled by His passion what He indicated by His birth, let us cleave to Him with that other wall which maintains the remnant of the Jews who have been saved through the gift of grace.[9] For the shepherds coming from nearby typified these Jews who deserve to be united to Him so that both they and we, whose vocation from afar was signified by the coming of the Magi, might remain, no longer foreigners and strangers,

6 Cf. 1 Cor. 1.27.
7 Matt. 9.13.
8 Ps. 117.22.
9 Cf. Rom. 11.5.

but fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God, built up on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets with Jesus Christ Himself the chief cornerstone. He 'has made both one'[10] so that in Him alone we might cherish unity and display untiring charity in collecting the branches which, once engrafted from the wild olive and now broken off by pride, have become heretical, for God is able to graft them back again.[11]

Sermon 201

(1) Not very many days ago we celebrated the birthday of the Lord; today, with no less fitting solemnity, we celebrate the revelation which marked the beginning of His manifestation to the Gentiles. On Christmas day, Jewish shepherds saw the newly born Infant; today, Magi coming from the East adored Him. For He, the cornerstone, the peace of two walls arising from no small difference, namely, that concerning circumcision and uncircumcision, was born so that they might be united in Him who became our peace and who made both one.[1] This union was prefigured in the shepherds of the Jews and the Magi of the Gentiles. Then and there began what would later increase and bear fruit throughout the world. Let us, then, with spiritual joy consider these two feasts of the Nativity and the Manifestation of our Lord as sources of our happiness. The Jewish shepherds were led to Him by the angelic message; the Gentile Magi, by a guiding star. This star confounded the meaningless reckonings and prognostications of the astrologers when it showed these worshipers of stars that the Creator of heaven and earth was worthier of adoration. For at His birth He Himself revealed

10 Eph. 2.14.
11 Cf. Rom. 11.17-25. See also M. Bourke, *A Study of the Metaphor of the Olive Tree in Romans XI* (Washington, D.C. 1947) 94-96.

1 Cf. Eph. 2.11-22.

this new star and at His death He veiled the ancient sun. In the light of the star faith began for the Gentiles; in the veiling of the sun the treachery of the Jews was indicted. What was that star which neither appeared previously among the other constellations nor remained to be pointed out at a later day? What else was it but the sublime voice of the heavens assigned to proclaim the glory of God, to announce with unusual brilliance the unusual parturition of the Virgin, and, on its withdrawal, to yield place throughout the whole world to the Gospel? What was it that the Magi said on their arrival? 'Where is he that is born king of the Jews?' What does this mean? Had not many kings of the Jews been born in previous ages? Why did they desire so ardently to see and adore the king of another nation? They say: 'For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him.'[2] Would they seek with such devotion, would they desire with so impelling a movement of piety, if they did not recognize Him who is King of the ages in the king of the Jews?

(2) In this way Pilate, too, was inspired by a flash of the truth when at the time of our Lord's passion he wrote the inscription, 'King of the Jews,' and when, at the attempt of the wicked Jews to change it, he answered: 'What I have written, I have written,'[3] because the prediction had been made in the Psalms: 'Destroy not the inscription of the title.'[4] Let us consider this great and wondrous mystery: the Magi were from among the Gentiles; Pilate, too, was a Gentile. They saw a star in the heavens; he wrote the inscription for the cross. Yet both Pilate and the Magi sought, or at least recognized, not a king of the Gentiles, but the King of the Jews. The Jews themselves, however, neither followed the star nor approved the inscription. Even then, therefore, the words which our Lord Himself later uttered were prefigured: 'Many will come from the east and from the west, and will feast with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom

2 Matt. 2.2.
3 John 19.19,22.
4 Cf. Ps. 56.1.

of heaven, but the children of the kingdom will be put forth into the darkness outside.'[5] For the Magi came from the East and Pilate from the West. Hence, the Magi bore witness to the King of the Jews at His rising, that is, at His birth, and Pilate at His setting, that is, at His death, so that in the kingdom of heaven with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the progenitors from whom the Jews drew their lineage, they might feast, not as legitimate offspring of these three, but as engrafted upon their stock through faith so as to prefigure the wild olive to be engrafted upon the olive tree of which the Apostle speaks.[6] Therefore, by these same Gentiles He was sought, or at least acknowledged, not as the king of the Gentiles, but as the King of the Jews, because the wild olive came to the olive tree, not the olive tree to the wild olive. Nevertheless, the branches deserving to be broken off, that is, the unfaithful Jews, answered the Magi when they inquired as to where Christ was born: 'In Bethlehem of Judea';[7] when Pilate reproached them because they wished their King to be crucified, they raged furiously. Thus, the Magi adored Christ after the Jews had indicated the place of His birth, a forecast of the fact that we learn to know Christ through the Scriptures which the Jews received; Pilate, one of the Gentiles, washed his hands when the Jews demanded the death of Christ,[8] a forecast of the fact that our sins are washed away by the Blood which the Jews shed. There will be another opportunity later, when our theme is the Passion, to discuss the testimony furnished by Pilate's inscription on which he wrote that Christ was the King of the Jews.

(3) Now, in truth, in this consideration of the manifestation of the incarnate Christ, let us devote the few moments which remain to the day of this revelation, the day which,

5 Matt. 8.11-13.
6 Cf. Rom. 11.24. See Bourke, *loc. cit.*
7 Matt. 2.5.
8 Cf. Matt. 27.24.

in the Greek derivative, is called the Epiphany, the day on which He began to be manifested to the Gentiles, when the Magi adored Him. It is a constant source of pleasure to consider how the Jews answered the query of the Magi as to where Christ was born by saying: 'In Bethlehem of Judea,' yet did not come to Him themselves. But, as the Magi departed, the star led them to the place where the Infant was, as if to show that it could have pointed out the spot in the first place, but had temporarily disappeared to make it possible for the Jews to be questioned. Moreover, the Jews were interrogated to show that they were preserving the divine records, not for their own salvation and knowledge, but for that of the Gentiles. For this reason, the Jews were expelled from their own kingdom and scattered throughout the earth so that, in all places, they might be forced to become witnesses to the faith which they hated. In fact, even after losing their temple, their sacrifice, their priesthood, and their kingdom, they hold on to their name and race in a few ancient rites, lest, mixed indiscriminately with the Gentiles, they perish and lose the testimony of the truth. Like Cain, who in envy and pride killed his just brother, they have been marked with a sign so that no one may kill them.[9] Indeed, this fact can be quite definitely noted in Psalm 58, where Christ, speaking as Man, says: 'My God has made revelation to me concerning my enemies: do not kill them lest they forget thy law.'[10] Strangely enough, by means of this people, enemies of the Christian faith, proof has been furnished to the Gentiles as to how Christ was foretold, lest, perhaps, when the Gentiles had seen how manifestly the prophecies were fulfilled, they should think that the Scriptures were made up by the Christians, since things which they perceived as accomplished facts were read aloud as foretold about Christ. Therefore, the sacred books are handed down by the Jews and thus God, in regard to our enemies, makes clear to us

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9 Cf. Gen. 4.1-15.
10 Cf. Ps. 58.12.

that He did not kill them, that is, He did not annihilate them from the face of the earth so that they might not forget His law, for by reading it and by observing it, though only outwardly, they keep it in mind and thus bring judgment upon themselves and furnish testimony to us.

Sermon 202

(1) The occasion bids me to make the subject of my sermon on this day the question as to why the noteworthy celebration of this day throughout the world brings joy to us and what it recalls by its yearly renewal. The Greek term Epiphany can be translated in Latin by Manifestation. For, on this day, the Magi are said to have adored the Lord, warned by the appearance of a star and led by its guidance. In fact, they saw the star in the East on the very day He was born and they realized whose birth it portended. Therefore, from that day they hurried on to this day; they frightened King Herod by their announcement; and, when the Jews gave them information from the sacred Scriptures, they found the city of Bethlehem where the Lord had been born. To the Lord Himself, then, they came, led by the star; they adored Him who had been thus pointed out to them; they offered Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh; and they went back by another route.[1] On the day of His birth, our Lord was manifested to shepherds aroused by an angel, and on that day, too, through the appearance of a star He was announced to Magi in the distant East, but it was on this day that He was adored by the Magi. Therefore, the whole Church of the Gentiles has adopted this day as a feast worthy of most devout celebration, for who were the Magi but the first-fruits of the Gentiles? The shepherds were Israelites; the Magi, Gentiles. The one group came from nearby; the other, from afar. Both, however, were united in [Christ] the

1 Cf. Matt. 2.1-13.

cornerstone. For, as the Apostle says: 'Coming, he announced the good tidings of peace to us who were afar off, and of peace to those who were near. . . . For he himself is our peace, he it is who has made both one, . . . and of the two he has created in himself one new man, making peace, and he has reconciled both in one body to God, having slain the enmity in himself.'[2]

(2) The Donatist heretics have never desired to celebrate this feast with us, and rightly so, for they neither love unity nor do they unite in fellowship with the Church of the East where the star appeared. But we, in the unity of Gentiles, celebrate the Manifestation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ where He gathered His first-fruits of the Gentiles. For, before the Child knew how to call His father and mother, as Isaias had prophesied of Him, He took the strength of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria,[3] that is, before He uttered human speech through His humanity, He took the strength of Damascus or that which gave confidence to Damascus. For, in the estimation of the world, that city had flourished for some time on account of her riches. But pre-eminence in riches is gained by gold, and the Magi as suppliants offered gold to Christ.

The spoils of Samaria were the people who worshiped her. Samaria was used as a symbol of idolatry, since it was there that the people of Israel, having turned away from the Lord, turned to the worship of idols. Therefore, Christ, intending to attack with the sword of the spirit the kingdom of the Devil throughout the whole world, even as a Child drew away these first spoils from idolatrous influence to attract to His worship these Magi, converted from the deadly curse of superstition; so that, although He as yet spoke no word on this earth, He might speak from heaven by a star; and, finally, to make known, not by the voice of His body, but by the power of the Word made flesh, who He was, and

2 Eph. 2.11-22.
3 Cf. Isa. 8.4.

why, and for whom He had come hither. For the Word, who from the beginning was God and was with God, now having become incarnate, had come to us to live with us while still He remained with the Father; not leaving the angels in the heavens above, but here below drawing men to Himself by means of angels. As the Word, He shone upon the heavenly inhabitants with unchanging truth; yet, because the inn was inadequate, He lay in a manger. A star revealed by Him in the heavens showed Him as worthy of adoration on earth. And yet this Child, who was so powerful and so great as a little One fled to Egypt in the arms of His parents because of the enmity of Herod, thus speaking eloquently, not yet in words, but in the members which He had assumed and in silence saying: 'If they have persecuted you in one town, flee to another.'[4] For, He was clothed in mortal flesh in which He prefigured us and in which He was going to die for us at the appointed time. Hence, from the Magi He accepted not only gold because He deserved to be honored, and frankincense because He merited adoration, but also myrrh because He was going to be buried. Moreover, He showed, in the case of the children whom Herod killed, how innocent and lowly were the sort of people who would, in turn, die for Him; for the two years of age of these children signified the number of the precepts upon which 'depend the whole Law and the Prophets.'[5]

(3) Now, in truth, who is not interested in the significance of the fact that, though the Jews quoted the Scriptures in reply to the question of the Magi as to where Christ was born, they did not adore Him with the Magi? Do we not see this even now when those very rites, to which their hardness of heart is subject, symbolize no other than Christ in whom they refuse to believe? When they kill a lamb and eat the Pasch,[6] do they not show to the Gentiles Christ whom

4 Cf. Matt. 10.23.
5 Matt. 22.40.
6 Cf. Exod. 12.1-14.

they do not adore with them? For what else is proved by the fact that, in order to reassure the minds of those who doubt concerning the testimony of the prophecies by which Christ was predicted and which some men suspect of having been written by the Christians, not as prognostications, but as records of things done, we often appeal to the sacred books of the Jews? Do not the Jews, then, show to the Gentiles Christ whom they refuse to adore?

We, then, my most dearly beloved, of whose nation the Magi constituted the first-fruits, we are the inheritance of Christ even unto the ends of the earth. For our sakes partial blindness has befallen Israel so that the full number of the Gentiles might enter[7] [heaven] after our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has been acknowledged, who to console us once lay in a narrow dwelling and now sits in heaven to draw us thither. Hence, let us proclaim Him on this earth, in this abode of our human nature, so that we may neither return to the place whence we came nor seek again the haunts of our former associations. For that is why the Magi did not return as they had come. The way was changed; their way of life was changed. To us, also, the heavens have announced the glory of God,[8] and truth, blazing forth from the Gospel like a star from heaven, has led us to adore Christ. With faithful attention we have accepted the prophecy proclaimed to the Jewish race as an indictment of the Jews who do not go along with us. Finally, acknowledging and praising Christ as the King and Priest who died for us, we have honored Him, as it were, with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The only thing left now is that, making known His Gospel, we follow a new course so that we may not return to the place whence we came.

7 Cf. Rom. 11.25.
8 Cf. Ps. 18.2.

Sermon 203

(1) The word Epiphany, a derivative from the Greek language, can be translated in Latin by Manifestation. On this day, therefore, the Redeemer of all nations, being revealed to all nations, occasioned this solemn feast. A very few days ago we celebrated His Nativity; today we celebrate His Manifestation. The tradition is that our Lord Jesus Christ was adored by the Magi on this day, thirteen days after His birth. The Gospel truthfully states that this event took place, and the universal acceptance of this glorious feast attests that it happened on this day. For it has seemed just, and it really is just, that, since the Magi were the first of the Gentiles to know Christ the Lord and since they, not yet influenced by His speech, followed the star which appeared to them and, like a tongue from heaven, distinctly spoke to them in behalf of the Speechless Word, then, I repeat, it is just that the Gentiles should recognize this day as the occasion of salvation for their first-fruits and that, with solemn observance, they should consecrate it to Christ the Lord in a spirit of thanksgiving. To be sure, the first-fruits of the Jews unto faith in the revelation of Christ were the shepherds who, approaching from nearby, saw Him on the very day of His birth. To them angels made the announcement; a star did this for the Magi. To the shepherds 'Glory to God in the highest'[1] was said; in the case of the Magi, the Psalmist's words, 'The heavens show forth the glory of God,'[2] were fulfilled. Both groups, as if they were the beginnings of two walls coming from different directions, that is, of circumcision and of uncircumcision, hurried on to the cornerstone so that He might be their peace, making both one.[3]

(2) Now, the shepherds praised God because they had

1 Luke 2.14.
2 Ps. 18.2.
3 Cf. Eph. 2.11-22.

seen Christ; the Magi, however, adored Christ when they saw Him. In the Jews, thanksgiving took precedence, whereas humility was more marked in the Magi. Perhaps the shepherds, less conscious of guilt, rejoiced more readily in the thought of salvation, whereas the Gentiles, burdened with many sins, sought pardon with greater submissiveness. This is the humility which sacred Scripture commends as more pronounced in those who belonged to the Gentiles than in the Jews. For from the Gentiles came the centurion who, although he had accepted the Lord with all his heart, said that he was unworthy to have Him enter into his house, desiring the Lord not to see his servant, but merely to command that he be healed. Thus he cherished deep within his heart the presence of Him from whose actual presence within his house he recoiled in all reverence. Then it was that the Lord said: 'I have not found such great faith in Israel.'[4] The Chanaanite woman, too, was a Gentile, who, when she heard the Lord liken her to a dog unworthy of having the bread of the children cast to her, nevertheless demanded the scraps destined for the dogs, and merited not to be considered unworthy because she did not deny her true status. For she herself heard the Master say: 'O woman, great is thy faith.'[5] Humility had made her faith great because she had made herself small.

(3) Therefore, the shepherds come from nearby to see; the Magi come from afar to adore. This is the humility on account of which the wild olive merited to be engrafted upon the olive tree and to bear olives contrary to its nature,[6] because it merited to change its nature through grace. For, although the whole world through the influence of the wild olive was becoming wild and bitter, enriched by the grace of the grafting it has become resplendent. Now people are coming from the ends of the earth, saying in the words of

4 Cf. Matt. 8.5-10.
5 Cf. Matt. 15.21-29.
6 Cf. Rom. 11.17-25. See Bourke, *loc. cit.*

Jeremias: 'Surely our fathers have possessed lies.'[7] And they come, not from one part of the world only, but, as the holy Gospel according to Luke says: 'from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south'[8] to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. So, by the grace of the Blessed Trinity, the whole earth from its four corners is called to the faith. According to this reckoning, when four is taken three times, the apostolic number, twelve, is consecrated as symbolizing the salvation of the whole world from its four corners in the grace of the Trinity. This number was also indicated by the vessel full of all kinds of animals, as it were of all nations, shown to Peter.[9] For this vessel, let down from the heavens by the four corners, was lowered and taken up three different times, so that the four became twelve. On that account, perhaps, when twelve days had elapsed after the birth of Christ, the Magi, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, came to see and to adore Christ and thus merited not only to insure their own salvation but also to prefigure that of all Gentiles. Let us, therefore, celebrate this day most devoutly and let us adore the Lord Jesus now dwelling in heaven, as those first-fruits of our race adored Him lying in the inn. They reverenced in Him what He would later be; we reverence what He has become. They, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, adored Him at the breast of His Mother; we, the Gentiles of today, adore Him sitting at the right hand of God.

Sermon 204

(1) A few days ago we celebrated the birthday of the Lord; today we celebrate His Epiphany. This word, derived from the Greek, means Manifestation and reminds us of the

7 Jer. 16.19.
8 Luke 13.29.
9 Cf. Acts 10.11-13.

words of the Apostle: 'Obviously great is the mystery of godliness which was manifested in the flesh.'[1] Thus, both feasts pertain to the revelation of Christ. On the first, He who existed as God with His Father without a beginning was born as Man of a human Mother. For mankind He was manifested in the flesh, because man could not see Him as He existed in His spiritual nature. On that day, which is called His Nativity, Jewish shepherds saw Him; on this day, rightly called the Epiphany, that is, the Manifestation, Magi from the East adored Him. To the former, angels announced His coming; for the others, a star performed this duty. The angels dwell in the heavens which the stars adorn. Hence, to both shepherds and Magi the heavens have shown forth the glory of God.[2]

(2) For both groups, He was born as the cornerstone so that, as the Apostle says:[3] 'of the two he might create in himself one new man, and make peace and reconcile both in one body to God by the cross.' For what is a corner but the joining of two walls coming from different directions and finding there, as it were, the kiss of peace? Circumcision and uncircumcision, that is, Jews and Gentiles, were definitely hostile to each other because of their differing and, indeed, conflicting religions, the former worshiping the one true God and the latter many false gods. Although the Jews were nearby and the Gentiles afar off, He who welded the two into one body for God brought them both to Himself, as the same Apostle immediately adds: 'by the cross, having slain the enmity in himself. And coming, he announced the good tidings of peace to you who were afar off, and of peace to those who were near; because through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.' See if the Apostle did not refer to the two walls arising from diverse enmities and to the Lord Jesus, the cornerstone to whom both groups were

1 1 Tim. 3.16.
2 Cf. Ps. 18.2.
3 Eph. 2.15-19.

drawn from different directions and in whom both groups were established in harmony, that is, those of the Jews as well as those of the Gentiles who believed in Him. It was as if the Psalmist referred to them when he said: 'Come ye to him [you who are from nearby and you who are from afar] and be enlightened: and your faces shall not be confounded.'[4] For it was also written: 'Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, chosen, precious; and he who believes in it shall not be put to shame.'[5] From one region and the other, both groups, having heard and obeyed, came; they held their peace; they ended their hostility; and thus shepherds and Magi were the first-fruits of both nations.

In the persons of the shepherds and of the Magi, the ox began to recognize his owner and the ass his Master's crib.[6] From the Jews came the horned ox, since among them the horns of the cross were prepared for Christ; from the Gentiles came the long-eared ass, since it was concerning them that the prophecy had been made: 'A people, which I knew not, hath served me: at the hearing of the ear they have obeyed me.'[7] For the Owner of the ox and the Master of the ass lay in a manger, yet He was furnishing common sustenance to both creatures. Therefore, because peace had come to those who were afar and to those who were near, Israelite shepherds, as those found nearby, came to Christ on the day of His birth, saw Him, and rejoiced; but the Magi Gentiles, as those found at a distance, came at an interval of several days after His birth, found, and adored Him on this day. It was quite appropriate, then, that we, the Church made up of converts gathered from the Gentiles, should join the celebration of this day on which Christ was manifested to the first-fruits of the Gentiles to the observance of that day on which Christ was born of the Jewish race, and that we

4 Cf. Ps. 33.6.
5 1 Peter 2.6.
6 Cf. Isa. 1.3.
7 Ps. 17.45.

should preserve the memory of so great a mystery by a twofold solemnity.

(3) When the two walls arising, on the one side, from the Jews and, on the other, from the Gentiles are looked upon as joining at the cornerstone and as preserving 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,'[8] let not the mere numerical superiority of the degenerate Jews disturb the mind, since among them were the builders, that is, those who wished to be teachers of the Law and of whom the Apostle says: 'They understand neither what they say nor the things about which they make assertion.'[9] For, through this blindness of mind, they rejected the stone which 'is become the head of the corner.'[10] But it would not have become the head of the corner had it not furnished, by the help of grace, a peaceful union to the two peoples who approached from different sources.

Therefore, let not the persecutors and slayers of Christ, those interested in building up the Law while tearing down the faith, those who reject the cornerstone and plot destruction for our poor city, be considered as on the Israelite wall. And let not the innumerable multitude of the Jews scattered throughout the lands to which they bring the testimony of sacred Scripture, although ignorant themselves of their import, be included on that wall. For in those Jews Jacob limps, whose thigh shrank in size after being touched,[11] symbolizing the halting multitude of people descended from his seed. But let those, among whom Jacob is blessed, be considered as on that holy wall which extends from them to the peace of the cornerstone. For Jacob is both blessed and lame; blessed in his holy descendants, lame in the reprobate. Let those be listed as on that holy wall who in large numbers preceded and followed the ass of the Saviour proclaiming:

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8 Eph. 4.3.
9 1 Tim. 1.7.
10 Ps. 117.22.
11 Cf. Gen. 32.25.

'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'[12] Let them be so considered who became disciples, chosen ones, and apostles. Let Stephen, too, be included who, called by the name signifying 'crown' in Greek, was crowned with martyrdom after the Resurrection of the Lord. Let those thousands who, though from among the persecutors, believed in Him after they received the Holy Spirit be numbered among them. Let the churches be so classified of which the Apostle says: 'And I was unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. But they had heard only that he who formerly persecuted us, now preaches the faith which once he ravaged. And they glorified God in me.'[13] With the above-mentioned distinctions, let the Israelite wall be considered and let it be joined to the wall, now visible, coming from the Gentiles. Thus Christ the Lord, the cornerstone first set in position in the manger and now lifted up to the height of heaven, is recognized and is no longer preached in vain.

12 Matt. 21.9.
13 Gal. 1.22-24.

FOR THE LENTEN SEASON

Sermon 205

Today we enter upon the observance of Lent, the season now presented to us in the passage of the liturgical year. An appropriately solemn sermon is your due so that the word of God, brought to you through my ministry, may sustain you in spirit while you fast in body and so that the inner man, thus refreshed by suitable food, may be able to accomplish and to persevere courageously in the disciplining of the outer man. For, to my spirit of devotion, it seems fitting that we, who are about to honor the Passion of our crucified Lord in the very near future, should fashion for ourselves a cross of the bodily pleasures in need of restraint, as the Apostle says: 'And they who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires.'[1] In fact, the Christian ought to be suspended constantly on this cross through his entire life, passed as it is in the midst of temptation. For there is no time in this life when we can tear out the nails of which the Psalmist speaks in the words: 'Pierce thou my flesh with thy fear.'[2] Bodily desires constitute the flesh, and the precepts of justice, the nails with which the fear of the Lord pierces our flesh and

1 Gal. 5.24.
2 Cf. Ps. 118.120.

crucifies us as victims acceptable to the Lord. Whence the same Apostle says: 'I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God.'[3]

Hence, there is a cross in regard to which the servant of God, far from being confounded, rejoices, saying: 'But as for me, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.'[4] That is a cross, I say, not of forty days' duration, but of one's whole life, which is symbolized by the mystical number of forty days, whether because man, about to lead this life, is formed in the womb for forty days, as some say, or because the four Gospels agree with the ten-fold Law and four tens equal that number, showing that both the Old and New Testaments are indispensable for us in this life, or it may be for some other and more likely reason which a keener and superior intellect can fathom. Hence, Moses and Elias and our Lord Himself fasted for forty days so that it might be suggested to us that in Moses and in Elias and in Christ Himself, that is, in the Law and the Prophets and the Gospel, this penance was performed just as it is by us, and so that, instead of being won over to and clinging to this world, we might rather put to death the old man, 'living not in revelry and drunkenness, not in debauchery and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But [let us] put on the Lord Jesus, and as for the flesh, take no thought for its lusts.'[5] Live always in this fashion, O Christian; if you do not wish to sink into the mire of this earth, do not come down from the cross. Moreover, if this ought to be done throughout one's entire life, with how much greater reason should it be done during these forty days in which this life is not only passed but is also symbolized?

(2) Therefore, on other days let not your hearts be weighed

3 Rom. 12.1.
4 Gal. 6.14.
5 Cf. Rom. 13.13,14.

down with self-indulgence and drunkenness,[6] but on these days also fast. On other days do not commit adultery, fornication, or any unlawful seduction, but on these days also refrain from that conjugal pleasure which is lawful. What you deprive yourself of by fasting add to your almsgiving; the time which was formerly taken up with conjugal duties spend in conversation with God; the body which was engaged in carnal love prostrate in earnest prayer; the hands which were entwined in embraces extend in supplication. You, who fast even on other days, increase your good works on these days. You, who crucify your body by perpetual continency on other days, throughout these days cleave to your God by more frequent and more fervent prayer. Let all be of one mind, all faultlessly faithful while on this journey, breathing with desire and burning with love for their one country. Let no one envy in another or belittle the gift of God which he himself lacks. Rather, where spiritual blessings are concerned, consider as your own what you love in your brother and let him, in turn, consider as his own what he loves in you. Let no one, under pretense of abstinence, aim at merely changing rather than eliminating pleasures, so that he seeks costly food because he is abstaining from meat, and rare liquors because he is not drinking wine, lest in the process, as it were, of taming the flesh he give greater rein to the demands of pleasure. Indeed, for the clean all food is clean, but for no one is luxury clean.

(3) Above all else, my brethren, fast from strife and discord. Keep in mind the words used by the Prophet in his vehement denunciation of certain persons: 'In the days of your fast your own wills are found because you torment all who are under your power and you strike with your fists; your voice is heard in outcry.' Continuing in the same strain, he adds: 'Not such a fast have I chosen, saith the Lord.'[7] If you desire to cry aloud, then have recourse to that appeal

6 Cf. Luke 21.34.
7 Cf. Isa. 58.3-5.

of which the Scripture says: 'I cried to the Lord with my voice.'[8] That voice is certainly not one of strife, but of charity; not of the flesh, but of the heart. Neither is it that cry of which Isaias says: 'I waited for him to make a judgment, but he has worked iniquity, not justice but a cry.'[9] 'Forgive, and you shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given to you.'[10] These are the two wings of prayer on which one flies to God: if any fault is committed against him, he forgives the offender and he gives alms to the needy.

Sermon 206

(1) With the completion of the year's cycle, the season of Lent has come, at which time I am constrained to exhort you because you owe the Lord works in harmony with the spirit of the season, works which, nevertheless, are useful not to the Lord, but to you. True, other seasons of the year ought to glow for the Christian by reason of his prayers, fasts, and almsdeeds, but this season ought to arouse even those who are sluggish at other times. In fact, those who are quick to attend to these works at other times should now perform them with even greater diligence. Life in this world is certainly the time of our humiliation as these days signify when the sufferings of the Lord Christ, who once suffered by dying for us, are renewed each year with the recurrence of this holy season. For what was done once and for all time so that our life might be renewed, is solemnized each year so that its memory may be kept fresh. If, therefore, we ought to be humble of heart with sentiments of most sincere piety throughout the entire period of our earthly sojourn when we live in the midst of temptations, how much more necessary is humility during these days when we not only pass the

8 Ps. 141.2.
9 Cf. Isa. 5.7.
10 Luke 6.37-39.

time of our humiliation by living but signalize it by special devotion? The humility of Christ has taught us to be humble because He yielded to the wicked by His death; the exaltation of Christ lifts us up because by rising again He blazed the way for His devoted followers. For, 'if we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we endure, we shall also reign with him.'[1] One of these conditions we now celebrate with due observance in view of His approaching Passion; the other we shall celebrate after Easter when His Resurrection is, as it were, accomplished again. Then, after the days of this humiliation will be the time of our exaltation. Although this is not yet the time to experience this [happiness], it gives us pleasure to anticipate it in our considerations. Now, therefore, let us voice our lamentations more insistently in prayers; then we shall exult more exuberantly in praise.

(2) Let us by our prayers add the wings of piety to our almsdeeds and fasting so that they may fly more readily to God. Moreover, the Christian soul understands how far removed he should be from theft of another's goods when he realizes that failure to share his surplus with the needy is like to theft. The Lord says: 'Give, and it shall be given to you; forgive, and you shall be forgiven.'[2] Let us graciously and fervently perform these two types of almsgiving, that is, giving and forgiving, for we, in turn, pray the Lord to give us good things and not to requite our evil deeds. 'Give, and it shall be given to you,' He says. What is truer, what is more just, than that he who refuses to give should cheat himself and not receive? If a farmer is not justified in seeking a harvest when he knows he has sowed no seed, how much more unreasonably does he who has refused to hear the petition of a poor man seek a generous response from God? For, in the person of the poor, He who experiences no hunger wished Himself to be fed. Therefore, let us not spurn our

1 2 Tim. 2.11-13.
2 Cf. Luke 6.37,38.

God who is needy in His poor, so that we in our need may be filled in Him who is rich. We have the needy, and we ourselves have need; let us give, therefore, so that we may receive. In truth, what is it that we give? And in return for that pittance which is meagre, visible, temporal, and earthly, what do we desire to receive? What the 'eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man.'[3] Without the assurance of God it would have been effrontery to wish to gain such treasures in return for such paltry trifles, and it is effrontery to refuse to give to our needy neighbor these things which we would never have possessed except from the bounty of Him who urges us to give. With what confidence do we hope to see Him giving to our neighbor and to us, if we despise His commands in the least details? 'Forgive, and you shall be forgiven,' that is, pardon and you shall be pardoned. Let servant be reconciled to fellow servant lest he be justly punished by the Lord. In this kind of almsgiving no one is poor. Even he who has no means of livelihood in this world may do this to insure his living for eternity. Gratuitously this alms is given; by being given away it is increased; and it is not consumed except when it is not shared. Therefore, let those enmities which have lasted even to this day be broken up and ended. Let them be ended lest they end you; let them be no longer held lest they hold you; let them be destroyed by the Redeemer lest they destroy you, the retainer.

(3) Let not your fasting be of the kind condemned by the Prophet when he said: 'Not this fast have I chosen, saith the Lord.'[4] For He denounces the fasts of quarrellers; He seeks those of the devout. He denounces those who oppress and seeks those who release. He denounces those who stir up hostilities and seeks those who set free. For, during these days, you restrain your desires from lawful pursuits that you may not do what is unlawful. At no time will he be addicted

3 1 Cor. 2.9.
4 Cf. Isa. 58.5.

to wine or adultery who is now continent in marriage. Thus, by humility and charity, by fasting and almsgiving, by temperance and forgiveness, by sharing blessings and by not retaliating for evils, by declining from wickedness and by doing good, our prayer seeks and attains peace.[5] For prayer, supported as it were, on the wings of virtues, speeds upwards and is easily borne into heaven whither Christ, our peace, has preceded.

Sermon 207

(1) By the help of the merciful Lord our God, the temptations of the world, the snares of the Devil, the suffering of the world, the enticement of the flesh, the surging waves of troubled times, and all corporal and spiritual adversities are to be overcome by almsgiving, fasting, and prayer. These practices ought to glow throughout the entire life of a Christian, but especially as the Paschal solemnity approaches which stirs up our minds by its yearly return, renewing in them the salutary memory that our Lord, the only-begotten Son of God, showed mercy to us and fasted and prayed for us. As a matter of fact, *eleemosyna* in Greek signifies mercy in Latin. Moreover, what mercy could be greater, so far as we poor wretches are concerned, than that which drew the Creator of the heavens down from heaven, clothed the Maker of the earth with earthly vesture, made Him, who in eternity remains equal to His Father, equal to us in mortality, and imposed on the Lord of the universe the form of a servant, so that He, our Bread, might hunger; that He, our Fulfillment, might thirst; that He, our Strength, might be weakened; that He, our Health, might be injured; that He, our Life, might die? And all this [He did] to satisfy our hunger, to moisten our dryness, to soothe our infirmity, to wipe out our iniquity, to enkindle our charity. What greater mercy could there be than that the Creator be created, the Ruler be

5 Cf. Ps. 33.15.

served, the Redeemer be sold, the Exalted be humbled, and the Reviver be killed? In regard to almsgiving, we are commanded to give bread to the hungry,[1] but He first gave Himself over to cruel enemies for us so that He might give Himself as food to us when we were hungry. We are commanded to receive the stranger; for our sake He 'came unto his own and his own received him not.'[2] In a word, let our soul bless Him who becomes a propitiation for all its iniquities, who heals all its diseases, who redeems its life from corruption, who crowns it in mercy and pity, who satisfies its desires in blessings.[3] Let us give alms the more generously and the more frequently in proportion as the day draws nearer on which the supreme almsgiving accomplished for us is celebrated. Fasting without mercy is worthless to him who fasts.

(2) Let us fast, humbling our souls as the day draws near on which the Teacher of humility humbled Himself becoming obedient even to death on a cross.[4] Let us imitate His cross, fastening to it our passions subdued by the nails of abstinence. Let us chastise our body, subjecting it to obedience, and, lest we slip into illicit pleasures through our undisciplined flesh, let us in taming it sometimes withdraw licit pleasures. Self-indulgence and drunkenness ought to be shunned on other days; throughout this season, however, even legitimate eating is to be checked. Adultery and fornication must always be abhorred and avoided, but on these days special restraint must be practised even by married persons. The flesh, which has been accustomed to restraint in regard to its own satisfaction, will readily submit to you when there is question of clinging to another's goods. Of course, care must be taken to avoid merely changing instead of lessening pleasures. For you may observe that certain persons seek out rare liquors in place of their ordinary

1 Cf. Isa. 58.7.
2 John 1.11.
3 Cf. Ps. 102.2-5.
4 Cf. Phil. 2.8.

wine; that they, with much greater relish, counterbalance by the juice of other fruits what they lose by denying themselves the juice of grapes; that, in place of meat, they procure food of manifold variety and appeal; that they store up, as opportune for this season, delights which they would be ashamed to indulge in at other times. In this way, the observance of Lent becomes, not the curbing of old passions, but an opportunity for new pleasures. Take measures in advance, my brethren, with as much diligence as possible, to prevent these attitudes from creeping upon you. Let frugality be joined to fasting. As surfeiting the stomach is to be censured, so stimulants of the appetite must be eliminated. It is not that certain kinds of food are to be detested, but that bodily pleasure is to be checked. Esau was censured, not for having desired a fat calf or plump birds, but for having coveted a dish of pottage.[5] And holy King David repented of having excessively desired water.[6] Hence, not by delicacies obtained with much labor and at great expense, but by the cheaper food found within reach, is the body to be refreshed, or, rather, sustained in its fasting.

(3) During these days of Lent our prayer is lifted up to God, supported by pious almsdeeds and by tempered fasting. With justification one seeks mercy from God when he does not deny it to his fellow man and when the pure intention of the petitioner's heart is not disturbed by phantom clouds of carnal desires. Let prayer be chaste, lest, perhaps, we crave not what charity but what cupidity seeks; let us not call down any evil upon our enemies; let us not rage passionately in prayer against those whom we cannot harm by actual injury or revenge. Surely, just as we are rendered fit for praying by almsdeeds and fasting, so our prayer itself gives alms when it is directed and poured forth not only for friends but for enemies as well and when it refrains from anger, hatred, and harmful vices. For, if we fast from food, how

5 Cf. Gen. 25.30-34.
6 Cf. 1. Par. 11.18-20.

much more does prayer recoil from poisons? Finally, while we are refreshed by taking food at regular and suitable times, let us never distract our prayer by such feasts. Rather let it endure perpetual fasts because there is a food proper to prayer which it is commanded to take without ceasing. Therefore, let it always fast from hatred and feast upon love.

Sermon 208

(1) The solemn season has come when I remind and goad on your charity in the Lord, although, were I to remain silent, the time itself would remind and encourage you to be enkindled with more active and lively fervor than usual in fasting, praying, and almsgiving. But the help of this sermon is given you so that, by the trumpet of this voice, your spirit, about to wage war against the flesh, may gain strength. Therefore, let your fasting be without contention, noise, and conflict, so that even those who are under your sway may notice a provident and gracious gentleness; so that harsh severity may be checked, but not so as to cast out salutary discipline. In truth, when you abstain from any kind of food, even that which is granted and permitted, for the purpose of chastising the body, remember that 'for the clean all things are clean' and do not consider anything unclean except what infidelity has polluted. For the Apostle says: 'For the defiled and unbelieving nothing is clean.'[1] Obviously, when the bodies of the faithful are brought into subjection, whatever lessens physical desires contributes to spiritual salvation. On that account you must take care not to substitute equally costly foods or even more costly banquets while you abstain from the flesh of animals. For, when the body is chastised and brought into subjection,[2] pleasures are to be limited, not merely changed. What difference does the kind

1 Titus 1.15; cf. Rom. 14.20.
2 Cf. 1 Cor. 9.27.

of food make when it is immoderate desire that is censured? Not only in regard to flesh, but also in regard to certain fruits and products of the fields, was the desire of the Israelites condemned by the divine voice.[3] And Esau lost his first birthright, not for a morsel of pork, but for a mess of pottage.[4]

I need not mention what our hungry Lord said about bread to His tempter,[5] when, far from taming His flesh as if it were rebellious, He was mercifully advising us as to what we ought to answer in similar temptations. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, regardless of whatever food you have decided to retrench, remember to keep your resolution with devout temperance and do not, by a sacrilegious error, condemn a creature of God. And you, who are bound by conjugal ties, do not despise the Apostle's advice that you mutually practice self-denial for a time so that you may have time for prayer.[6] For it is without reproach to omit on these days what is useful on other days. I think it should not be burdensome for married people to do on the holy days of this yearly observance what widows have openly professed for a certain part of their life and what virgins have undertaken for their entire life.

(2) It is truly a kind of obligation to increase one's almsdeeds during these days. For where do you expend what you deprive yourself of by abstinence more justly than in pity? And what is more unjust than that prolonged avarice should hold on to, or deferred self-indulgence should consume, what abstinence saves? Consider to whom you owe what you deny yourself, so that mercy may give to charity what temperance withholds from self-satisfaction. What shall I say of that work of mercy wherein nothing is weighed out from the storerooms, nothing taken from the purse, but alms is given from the heart, alms which begins to be harmful

3 Cf. Num. 11.5,33,34.
4 Cf. Gen. 25.30-34.
5 Cf. Matt. 4.3-5.
6 Cf. 1 Cor. 7.5.

if it is kept rather than bestowed? I speak now of anger against another held in the heart. For what is more foolish than to avoid one enemy outwardly, yet hold a much more dangerous one in the inner recesses of your heart? In this regard the Apostle says: 'Do not let the sun go down on your anger,' to which he immediately adds: 'Do not give place to the devil,'[7] as if he meant that he who does not quickly drive anger from his mind furnishes through his anger, as through a door, an opening for the Devil. In the first place, then, man must see to it that the sun does not go down on his anger lest the sun of justice leave his mind. But, if anger has persisted in anyone's heart up to the present, at least let it be routed by the approaching day of the Passion of our Lord, who, instead of being angry at His slayers, poured forth His prayers and His blood for them while He hung upon the wood of the cross.[8] Therefore, if anger has held out with most shameful boldness in the heart of any one of you until these holy days, now at least let it depart,[9] so that your prayer may proceed in peace and so that it may not stumble, tremble, or become mute under the pricking of conscience when it has come to that passage where it must say: 'Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.'[10] You are about to ask that something may not be paid back to you and that something may be given to you. Then, 'forgive, and you shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given to you.'[11] Even if I did not admonish you, my brethren, you ought to attend to these matters with constant consideration. But, since my sermon is helped, not only by the assistance of so many divine testimonies, but also by the celebration of this present day, I ought not to fear lest any one of you despise, not me, but the Lord of all in me. I ought, rather, to hope that His flock, recognizing what is said as His, will listen

7 Eph. 4.26,27.
8 Cf. Luke 23.34.
9 Cf. Eccle. 11.10.
10 Matt. 6.12.
11 Luke 6.37,38.

to Him with profit, since this flock, in turn, needs to be listened to by Him.

Sermon 209

(1) The solemn season has come when I would remind your Charity to give more attentive consideration to your soul and to chastise your body. For these forty days are very sacred throughout the whole world, and at the approach of Easter the entire universe, which God reconciles to Himself in Christ, celebrates them with laudable devotion. If any enmities, which either ought not to have arisen or ought to have died quickly, have succeeded in persisting among the brethren because of negligence, obstinacy, or a reserve which is not modest but proud, at least now let them be brought to an end. The sun ought not to have set upon them;[1] at least, after many risings and settings of the sun let them be extinguished by their own disappearance and let them not be renewed by another rising. The negligent person forgets to end his hostility; the stubborn one is unwilling to grant pardon when it is asked; the proudly reserved person disdains to seek pardon. Hostilities feed upon these three vices, but they kill the soul in which they are not put to death. On the other hand, memory guards against negligence, mercy against obstinacy, and submissive prudence against haughty reserve. Let him who realizes that he is unmindful of harmony shake off his sluggishness by energetically rousing himself. Let him who desires to be harsh in making demands upon his debtors consider that he is God's debtor. Let him who is ashamed to seek forgiveness of his brother overcome this reprehensible shame by honorable fear, so that, with these harmful enmities ended and really dead, you may live. All this, charity which 'is not pretentious'[2] accomplishes. In so far as charity is present, my brethren,

1 Cf. Eph. 4.26.
2 1 Cor. 13.4.

let it be exercised in living well; in so far as it is lacking, let it be obtained by fervent prayer.

(2) So that our prayers may be helped by suitable supports during these days when we ought to make them more fervently, let us also bestow alms more fervently. Let us supplement our ordinary contributions with that which is saved by fasting and abstaining from our usual food. Although each one ought to give more abundant alms, he who, because of some physical need or regular diet, is not able to abstain so as to give to the poor that of which he deprives himself, ought in piety to contribute to the poor for the very reason that he does not restrict himself in other ways. Since it is less possible for him to help his prayers by mortification of his body, let him enclose in the heart of the poor man a more generous alms which can there pray for him. This is a most beneficial and estimable advice from holy Scripture: 'Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and it shall obtain help for thee.'[3]

(3) Furthermore, we advise those who are abstaining from meat not to avoid as unclean the dishes in which meat has been cooked. For the Apostle, speaking on this point, says: 'For the clean all things are clean.'[4] According to sound doctrine, what is done in practices of this sort is done, not for the sake of avoiding uncleanness, but to restrain concupiscence. Wherefore, those who refrain from flesh meat in order to seek other kinds of food more difficult to obtain and more costly make a great mistake. For this is not undertaking abstinence, but simply varying one's luxury. How am I going to tell such people to give to the poor that of which they deprive themselves when ordinary food is put aside by them so as to increase expenses by obtaining something else? Therefore, on these days fast more frequently, spend money on yourselves more sparingly, and give more generously to the needy. These days also demand continence in married per-

3 Eccli. 29.15.
4 Titus 1.15.

sons, as the Apostle says: 'for a time, that you may give yourselves to prayer; and return together again lest Satan tempt you because you lack self-control.'[5] It is not arduous and difficult for faithful married persons to do for a few days what holy widows have undertaken from a certain period to the end of their lives and what holy virgins do throughout their entire lives. And so, in all these classes, let devotion be enkindled, let self-elation be checked. Let no one rejoice in the blessing of generosity to such a degree that he lose the blessing of humility. In truth, all other gifts of God are of no avail unless the bond of charity be present.

Sermon 210

(1) The solemn season has come which reminds us to humiliate our souls by prayer and fasting and to chastise our body to a greater degree than at other periods of the year. In reply to the questions as to why this season is observed at the approach of the solemnity of the Lord's Passion and why its celebration is linked with the mystery of the number forty, since this information is wont to move some people, I have undertaken to set before you what our Lord deigned to give as a worthy answer to these queries. Furthermore, in the effort to find matter suitable to present, I am helped much by the faith and piety of those who, I know, seek this information, not in a controversial spirit, but in a sincere desire for knowledge.

The query is often posed as to why our Lord Jesus Christ, who, after assuming human nature and becoming man, showed Himself to men to furnish us an example of living, dying, and rising again, did not fast before but after He was baptized. For it is recorded thus in the Gospel: 'And when he had been baptized, he immediately came up from the water. And behold, the heavens were opened to him, and

5 1 Cor. 7.5.

he saw the Spirit of God descending . . . and coming upon him. And behold, a voice from the heavens said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit, to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.'[1] We, however, along with those who are to be baptized, fast before the day of baptism, which comes close to Easter, and we relax the fast for fifty days after Easter. Now, if it were permitted to baptize and to be baptized only on the very solemn feast of the Pasch, this arrangement would rightly be followed. But, since, through the bounty of Him who gave us power to become sons of God,[2] there is no prohibition in regard to the administration of baptism throughout the whole year according as anyone experiences the need or desire, and since we are permitted to celebrate the anniversary of the Passion of the Lord only on a particular day of the year, which is called the Pasch, then without a doubt the sacrament of baptism ought to be distinguished from the Pasch. For one is permitted to receive the sacrament on any day, but it is proper to celebrate the Pasch only on one definite day of the year. The sacrament is given to renew life; the Pasch is commended to the memory of one's piety. But, because a far greater number of candidates for baptism assembles on the Pasch, this day stands out, not because it is richer in the grace of salvation, but because the greater joy of the feast invites us.

(2) What of the fact that even the baptism of John, which Christ then received, must be distinguished from the baptism of Christ Himself, which His followers receive, and that the baptism by which Christ was baptized is not better than that by which the Christian is baptized because Christ is better than the Christian, but, rather, that the baptism which is Christ's is preferred to the other just because it is Christ's? For John baptized Christ, although he acknowledged that

1 Matt. 3.16-4.3.
2 Cf. John 1.12.

he was inferior to Christ; but Christ, who manifested Himself as greater than John, baptizes the Christian. In like manner, the mystery of the Resurrection of Christ, by which the Christian is circumcised for the destruction of the old, carnal life, so that he may hearken to the Apostle when he says: 'Just as Christ has risen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life,'[3] is better than the circumcision of the flesh which no Christian now receives, although Christ received it. Likewise, the old Pasch which the Jews were commanded to celebrate by the slaying of a lamb is not, by reason of the fact that Christ celebrated it with His disciples, better than our Pasch on which Christ Himself was immolated. For it was in keeping with His desire to furnish us an example of humility and devotion that He, on coming to us, deigned to share in those symbolic mysteries by which His coming was foreshadowed, so that in this way He might indicate the great devotion with which we should receive these sacraments which proclaim that He has come. Therefore, it must not be believed that Christ laid down as a rule of regular observance that it is necessary to fast immediately after the reception of baptism, because He Himself fasted after having received the baptism of John. On the contrary, He clearly taught by His example that we must fast when we are engaged in a trying conflict with the Tempter. For Christ, who deigned to be born as man, did not scorn to be tempted as man for this very reason, namely, that the Christian, thus instructed by his Master, might not be overcome by the Tempter. Therefore, man must fast when a similar struggle with temptation comes, whether it be immediately after baptism or after a considerable lapse of time, so that the body may discharge its military service by its discipline and the soul may gain a victory by its humiliation. Hence, in this precedent set by our Lord, the fast was occasioned, not by the immersion in the Jordan, but by the [anticipated] temptation of the Devil.

3 Rom. 6.4.

(3) This is the reason why we fast before solemnizing the Passion of the Lord and why the relaxation of the fast is ended on the fiftieth day after Easter. Everyone who fasts with right dispositions either in a spirit of sincere faith humbles his soul in prayerful lamentation and in corporal penance, or directs his intention, raised above carnal enticement by a holy, spiritual delight in truth and wisdom, to the endurance of hunger and thirst.[4] Our Lord explained[5] both types of fasting to those who asked Him why His disciples did not fast. Concerning the first type which pertains to the humiliation of the soul, He said: 'The children of the bridegroom cannot mourn so long as the bridegroom is with them. But the hour will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they will fast.' In regard to the other type of fasting which offers feasts for the mind, He went on to say: 'No one sews a patch of new cloth on an old garment, lest a greater rent be made. Nor do people pour new wine into old wineskins lest the skins burst and the wine be spilt. But they put new wine into fresh skins, and both are saved.' Hence, because the Bridegroom has been taken away, we, the children of that beautiful Bridegroom, certainly must mourn. For He is 'beautiful above the sons of men: grace is poured abroad in his lips.'[6] In the hands of His persecutors, however, He had neither beauty nor comeliness, and His life was taken away from this earth.[7] With reason do we mourn if we burn with desire for Him. They, indeed, were blessed who were permitted, before His Passion, to enjoy His presence, to question Him as they wished, and to listen to Him as it befitted them to listen. Before His coming, their fathers desired to see those days and did not see them, because they had been allotted their function in another dispensation; through them His coming would be predicted but He, on His advent, would

4 The reading *in pia* instead of *inopia,* suggested by Morel, *Elem. Critic.* 355-356, has been followed here.

5 Cf. Matt. 9.15-18.

6 Cf. Ps. 44.3.

7 Cf. Isa. 53.2,8.

not be heard by them. It was of them that our Lord spoke when He said to His disciples: 'Many just men and prophets have longed to see what you see, and they have not seen it; and to hear what your hear, and they have not heard it.'[8] In us, however, that other statement which He Himself likewise uttered has been fulfilled: 'The days will come when you will long to see one of these days and you will not be able to do so.'[9]

(4) Who would not be on fire with the flame of holy desires? Who would not mourn here? Who would not be afflicted in his sorrow? Who would not say: 'My tears have become my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: Where is thy God?'[10] Of course, we believe in Him as He sits at the right hand of the Father; nevertheless, as long as we are in the body we are exiled from Him[11] and we are unable to show Him to those who, in doubt and rejection, say: 'Where is thy God?'[12] Rightly did the Apostle desire to be dissolved and to be with Him. However, Paul considered that to stay on in the flesh was not best for him, but necessary for us,[13] since the 'earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things' when 'the thoughts of mortal men are fearful and our counsels uncertain.'[14]

The life of man upon earth, then, is a time of trial,[15] and in the night of this age the 'lion goes about seeking someone to devour,'[16] not the 'lion of the tribe of Juda'[17] our King, but the diabolic lion, our Adversary. Our King, however, portraying in Himself alone the four figures of animals mentioned in the Apocalypse of John, was born as a man, rendered service as a lion, was immolated as a calf, and flew upward

8 Cf. Matt. 13.17.
9 Cf. Luke 17.22.
10 Cf. Ps. 41.4.
11 Cf. 2 Cor. 5.6.
12 Ps. 41.4.
13 Cf. Phil. 1.23-25.
14 Cf. Wisd. 9.14-16.
15 Cf. Job. 7.1.
16 1 Peter 5.8.
17 Apoc. 5.5.

as an eagle.[18] 'He flew upon the wings of the winds. And he made darkness his covert.'[19] He appointed the darkness, and the night was made in which all beasts of the woods go about.[20] The roaring whelps of lions [mentioned in that same passage] are, to be sure, the tempters through whom the Devil seeks whom he may devour. Nevertheless, they have no power except over those whom they have ensnared, as is indicated by this passage which follows in the same psalm: 'seeking their meat from God.' Who would not fear in the night of this world, a night so dangerous and so full of temptations? Who would not tremble in every bone lest he be judged worthy of being cast into the jaws of so cruel an enemy to be devoured? Therefore, we must fast and pray.

(5) And when [would we fast and pray] with greater reason and with greater intensity than when the solemnization of the Lord's Passion is approaching, on which yearly celebration, the memory of that night is, in a certain manner, engraved on our minds lest it be destroyed by forgetfulness and lest that roaring beast find us sleeping, not physically, but spiritually? For what else did the Passion of our Lord, in the person of our Head, Christ Jesus, commend to us as calling for the greatest attention except the trial of this life? Hence, as the time of His death drew near, He said to Peter: 'Satan has desired to sift you as wheat: and I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith may not fail; go and strengthen thy brethren.'[21] And assuredly he did strengthen us through his apostolate, his martyrdom, and his letters. Furthermore, when he was admonishing us about the terrifying night of which I am speaking, he taught us how cautiously we should be on our guard, [using] the encouragement of prophecy as a night lamp, in the words: 'And we have the word of prophecy, surer still, to which you do well to attend, as to

18 Cf. Apoc. 4.7.
19 Ps. 17.11,12.
20 Ps. 103.20,21.
21 Cf. Luke 22.31,32.

a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.'[22]

Therefore, let our loins be girt about and our lamps burning, and we ourselves like men waiting for the master's return from the wedding.[23] Let us not say to one another: 'Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we shall die.'[24] But for the very reason that the day of death is uncertain and the day of life is troublesome, let us fast and pray more earnestly 'for tomorrow we shall die.' The Lord said:[25] 'A little while and you shall not see me, and again a little while and you shall see me.' This is the hour of which He said: 'You shall be sorrowful, but the world shall rejoice,' that is, this life in which we sojourn apart from Him is full of temptations. However, He goes on to say: 'But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one shall take from you.' We rejoice even now, however, trusting Him who is most faithful to His promises, waiting for that fuller joy to come when 'we shall be like to him, for we shall see him just as he is,' and our joy no one shall take from us.[26] For we have received the Holy Spirit, the gracious and gratuitous pledge of this hope, who stirs up in our hearts the indescribable pains of holy desires. 'For we have conceived,' as Isaias says, 'and we have brought forth the spirit of salvation.'[27] And the Lord says: 'When a woman is in labor, she is sad because her day has come. But when she has brought forth the child, there is great joy because a man is born into the world.'[28] This will be the great joy which no one will take from us, by means of which we shall be transferred to eternal light from this preliminary stage of faith. Let us now, therefore, fast and pray, since this is our day of labor.

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22 2 Peter 1.19.
23 Cf. Luke 12.35,36.
24 1 Cor. 15.32.
25 John 16.19,20,22.
26 1 John 3.2; cf. John 16.22.
27 Cf. Isa. 26.18.
28 Cf. John 16.21.

(6) The whole Body of Christ, diffused through the entire world, that is, the whole Church, practises penance as that corporate unity which says in the psalm: 'To thee have I cried from the ends of the earth; when my heart was in anguish.'[29] Hence, light begins to dawn upon us as to why the Lenten season was inaugurated as the solemnity of this humiliation. For the [united Church] which cries from the ends of the earth when its heart is in anguish cries from those four regions of the earth which even the Scriptures often mention, that is, from the East and West, from the North and the South. Through the entire area the Decalogue of the Law has been promulgated, not merely to be feared in its literal expression, but to be fulfilled in the grace of charity. Hence, when four has been multiplied by ten, we see the number forty rounded out. Yet, in the struggle with temptation, when there is pardon for sin, who fulfills perfectly the law, 'Thou shalt no covet'?[30] For this reason, we must fast and pray, without, however, ceasing from good works. For such labor, that recompense called by the name of *denarius* is given eventually.[31] Moreover, just as *ternarius* receives its name from 'three,' and *quaternarius* from 'four,' so *denarius* comes from 'ten.' This number, associated with forty, is given as a reward for labor. The representation of the number fifty signifies the period of rejoicing which no one will take from us. In this life we do not yet have any experience of this joy. Nevertheless, after the commemoration of our Lord's Passion, through the fifty days following His Resurrection on which we relax the fast, we proclaim this joy by singing 'Alleluia' in the praises of the Lord.

Now, therefore, in the name of Christ, I exhort you, my dearly beloved brethren, to propitiate God by daily fasts, by more generous almsgiving, and by more fervent prayers so that you may not be overcome by Satan. Now is

29 Ps. 60.3.
30 Exod. 20.17.
31 Cf. Matt. 20.2-13.

the time for husbands to practise self-restraint with their wives and likewise for wives to do so with their husbands so that both may have more time for prayer. And, as a matter of fact, they ought to do this on certain days throughout the entire year; the more frequently they do so, the better it will be, because he who greedily seeks privileges offends the one who has granted these privileges. Prayer is definitely a spiritual matter. Hence, it is more acceptable according as it fulfills more completely the demands of its nature. It is, moreover, poured forth from a more spiritual source in proportion as the soul which gives expression to it is raised above carnal desires.

(7) For forty days Moses, the guardian of the Law, fasted; for forty days Elias, the most excellent of the Prophets, fasted; for forty days the Lord Himself, to whom both the Law and the Prophets gave testimony, fasted. Hence, it was in company with these two that He revealed Himself on the mountain. Let us, however, who are not able to perform this long fast, as they did, taking no nourishment for so many days and nights, at least do as much as we can, so that, with the exception of those days on which, for certain reasons, the law of the Church forbids us to fast, we may please the Lord God by daily or frequent fasting. But you do not think, do you, that as the fast from food and drink cannot be constant throughout so many days, so abstinence from marital pleasures cannot be continuous? When we see many persons of both sexes preserving inviolate, in the name of Christ, their bodies which have been consecrated to God, I think it is not a great accomplishment for chaste married persons to do during the entire Paschal season what virgins do throughout their whole life.

(8) Truly, I have commended this practice [of fasting] to you as forcibly as I could, although I should not have to urge you since it is a time for humiliating one's soul. Nevertheless, because of the errors of certain persons who, through their boastful enticements and vicious habits, unceasingly

make me anxious in your regard, I cannot remain silent. There are certain observers of Lent who are voluptuous rather than religious; who seek out new delights in place of doing violence to old passions; who, by the lavish and costly preparation of various fruits, strive to surpass the variety and taste of all other dishes. They shun as unclean the vessels in which flesh has been cooked, but they do not shun the excesses of taste and appetite in their own flesh. They fast, not to lessen their usual gluttony by temperance, but to increase their immoderate desires by unusual variety. For, when the time for eating has come, they rush to well-laden tables as cattle to stalls. They tax their hearts and bloat their stomachs with too many courses, and lest their appetite should become jaded by the abundance, they stimulate it by various kinds of artfully prepared and exotic condiments. In a word, when fasting, they take so much to eat that they are not able to digest it.

(9) There are people who do not drink wine so that they may seek out for themselves other liquors from the juice of other fruits, not for their health's sake, but for pleasure, just as if Lent were not an observance of devout humility but an opportunity for new delights. If the weakness of one's stomach cannot endure the drinking of water, how much more honorable it would be to sustain it by a moderate amount of the customary wine than to seek liquors which neither wine-dealer nor wine-press have ever seen, not so much for the purpose of choosing a more costly drink as of showing disapproval of a less expensive one? Moreover, what is more absurd, at this time when the flesh should be more closely held in check, than to obtain such great delights for it that the greediness of the appetite is loathe to have the season of Lent come to an end? What is more unseemly in these days of humiliation when all people ought to imitate the food of the poor, than to live in such a manner that, if one were to continue so to live throughout his whole life, the patrimonies of the rich would not be sufficient to support

him? Be on your guard against these tendencies, then, my dearly beloved. Consider what is written: 'Go not after thy lusts.'[32] If this most salutary precept ought to be observed at all times, how much more fully should it be carried out in these days when the relaxation of our desires in unusual pleasures is so discountenanced that even he who has not restrained his usual pleasures is rightly censured.

(10) Be particularly mindful of the poor, so that what you take from yourself by living sparingly you may lay away in heavenly treasures. Let the needy Christ receive that of which the fasting Christian deprives himself. Let the self-restraint of the willing soul be the sustenance of the one in need. Let the voluntary neediness of the one possessing an abundance become the necessary abundance of the one in need. Let there be a merciful readiness to forgive in a conciliatory and humble soul. Let him who has done wrong seek pardon and let him who suffered the wrong give pardon, so that we may not be possessed by Satan who gloats over the disagreements of Christians. For this is a very profitable way of giving alms, namely, to cancel the debt of one's fellow servant so that one's own debt may be cancelled by the Lord. The heavenly Master commended both deeds as good when He said: 'Forgive, and you shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given to you.'[33] Recall how that servant, whose entire debt had been cancelled by his master, received a double punishment because he did not show to a fellow servant owing him a hundred denarii the same mercy which he had received in regard to his debt of 10,000 talents.[34]

In this kind of good work, where good will is the sole requisite, there is no excuse possible. Some one may say: 'I cannot fast without upsetting my stomach.' He may even say: 'I wish to give to the poor, but I do not have the means to do so,' or 'I have so little that I run the risk of being in

32 Eccli. 18.30.
33 Luke 6.37,38.
34 Cf. Matt. 18.26-35.

need myself if I give to others.' Even in these matters men sometimes make false excuses for themselves, because they do not find true ones. Nevertheless, who is there who would say: 'I did not pardon the one seeking forgiveness from me because ill health prevented me,' or 'because I had not a hand with which to embrace him'? Forgive, that you may be forgiven.[35] Here there is no work of the body; no member of the body is lifted up to help a soul, so that what is asked may be granted. All is done by the will; all is accomplished by the will. Act without anxiety; give without anxiety. You will experience no physical indisposition; you will have nothing less in your home. Now in truth, my brethren, see what an evil it is that he who has been commanded to love even his enemy does not pardon a penitent brother. Since this is so and since it is written in the Scriptures: 'Do not let the sun go down upon your anger,'[36] consider my dear brethren, whether he ought to be called a Christian who, at least in these days, does not wish to put an end to enmities which he should never have indulged.

Sermon 211

These holy days which we are devoting to the observance of Lent remind me to speak to you about fraternal agreement, so that whoever has a complaint against another may bring it to an end lest he himself come to an end. Do not despise these words, my brethren. For, by reason of the fact that this mortal and frail life, which is passed amid so many earthly temptations and which prays that it may not be overwhelmed by them, cannot be lived even by a just person without some sins, we have a remedy by which we can live because our Teacher, God, taught us to say in His

35 Cf. Luke 6.37.
36 Eph. 4.26.

prayer: 'Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.'[1] We have done what was stipulated and what was pleasing in the eyes of God, and we have signed the agreement for cancelling our debt. If we ourselves forgive, we seek to be forgiven with the utmost confidence; but if we do not forgive, let us not think that our sins are forgiven; let us not deceive ourselves. Let man not deceive himself; God deceives no man. It is human to get angry: would that we did not have this power! It is human to get angry; but your anger ought not, like a tender young twig, to be watered by suspicions and finally to grow into a tree of hatred. For anger is one thing; hatred, another. Assuredly, a father often becomes angry at his son, but he does not hate him; he becomes angry in order to correct him. If he is angry for the purpose of correction, he is angry while he continues to love. For that reason it has been said: 'Thou dost see the speck in thy brother's eye, but dost not consider the beam in thy own eye.'[2] You censure anger in another, and you nourish hatred in yourself. In comparison with hatred, anger is a mere twig; but, if you cultivate a twig, it will become a tree; if you uproot it and cast it out, it will amount to nothing.

(2) If you were attentive when the Epistle of St. John was read, you should have been terrified by his words, for he says: 'The darkness has passed and the true light is now shining.' Then, continuing, he adds: 'He who says that he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in the darkness still.'[3] But perhaps man may think that the darkness is like that suffered by those who are shut up in prisons. Would that it were so! Nevertheless, no one wishes to be in such darkness. Innocent people, however, can be confined in the darkness of prisons. In fact, the martyrs were so imprisoned; darkness engulfed them on all sides but light shone in their hearts. In that gloom of the prison they saw God, not with

1 Matt. 6.12.
2 Cf. Matt. 7.3.
3 1 John 2.8,9.

the eyes of the body, but in the love of the brethren. Do you wish to know the nature of that darkness of which the Scriptures say: 'He who hates his brother is in the darkness still'? St. John also says in another place: 'He who hates his brother is a murderer.'[4] He who hates his brother walks about, leaves and enters the house, goes on his way burdened with no fetters, shut up in no prison, yet bound by his guilt. Do not consider that he is without confinement. His heart is his prison. Lest by chance you should contemn such darkness when you hear: 'He who hates his brother is in the darkness still,' St. John says in addition: 'He who hates his brother is a murderer.' Do you hate your brother and walk about free from care? Are you unwilling to be reconciled, although God is giving you an opportunity for that purpose? Behold, you are a murderer and yet you live. If you had an angry Master, you would be taken off suddenly in the midst of your hatred of your brother. God is sparing you; spare yourself; make peace with your brother. But, perhaps, though you wish to do so, he is unwilling. Let that suffice so far as you are concerned. You now have cause for grievance, for you have done your part. If you wish to be reconciled and he is unwilling, say in all security: 'Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.'

(3) Perhaps you have sinned against your brother; you wish to make peace with him; you wish to say to him: 'My brother, forgive me for having sinned against you.' But he is unwilling to forgive; he does not wish to discharge your debt; he is reluctant to cancel what you owe him. Let him take heed inasmuch as he, too, has to pray. When he shall come, who has been unwilling to forgive you for having sinned against him, when he shall come to pray, what is he going to do? Let him say: 'Our Father who art in heaven.' Let him speak thus and add: 'Hallowed be thy name.' In addition to this say: 'Thy kingdom come.' And continue with: 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' Then

4 Cf. 1 John 3.15.

proceed with: 'Give us this day our daily bread.'[5] You have said this much; now see if, perchance, you wish to omit what follows and substitute something else. There is no way by which you can pass; you are held in this spot. Speak, then, and speak the truth, or if you have no cause for saying: 'Forgive us our debts,' do not say it. Yet, where is [your recollection of] that other statement which the same Apostle made: 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us'?[6] But if the consciousness of our frailty stings us, and, indeed, in this world there is an abundance of iniquity, then say: 'Forgive us our debts.' But, consider what follows, for you have been unwilling to forgive your brother's sin and you are about to say: 'as we also forgive our debtors.' Or are you not going to say it? If you are not going to say the words, you will receive nothing; but if you are going to say them, you will speak falsely. Therefore, speak and speak the truth. How are you going to speak the truth, if you have been unwilling to forgive the sin of your brother?

(4) I have admonished him; now I console you, whoever you are, if only you are one who has said to your brother: 'Forgive me for having sinned against you.' If you have spoken with your whole heart, with a true humility and unfeigned charity, which God sees in the heart whence your words have come, and if your brother has continued to refuse to forgive you, do not be concerned. You are both servants and you have the same Master; you are indebted to your fellow servant, but he is unwilling to forgive you; importune your Master. What the Lord has pardoned let a servant exact, if he can. Furthermore, I say this: I advised him who was unwilling to forgive his brother to do what he was reluctant to do when his brother sought to be forgiven, lest when he himself prays he may not obtain what he desires. I also advised him who sought pardon for his

5 Matt. 6.9-12.
6 1 John 1.8.

sins from his brother and did not obtain it to be confident of obtaining from the Lord what he failed to get from his brother. There is another word of advice which I would give when your brother has sinned against you and has been unwilling to say to you: 'Forgive me for having sinned against you.' Such words are plentiful.[7] Would that God would root them out of His land, that is, out of your hearts! How many there are who know that they have sinned against their brethren and yet are unwilling to say: 'Forgive me.' They were not ashamed to commit sin, but they are ashamed to beg pardon; they did not blush when there was question of iniquity, but they do blush where humility is concerned.

(5) Above all, therefore, do I admonish those of you who are at variance with the brethren. You are summoning yourselves before your own tribunal; you are examining yourselves; you are bringing a just judgment against yourselves within your own hearts; and you are discovering that you ought not to have done what you have done, that you ought not to have said what you have said. Seek pardon, then, as brethren from brethren. Do for your brethren what the Apostle advises: 'Generously forgiving one another, as also God in Christ has forgiven you.'[8] Do this, and do not be ashamed to seek pardon. In the same manner I speak to all, men and women, young and old, lay persons and clerics, and to myself, also. Let us all hearken; let us all fear. If we have sinned against our brethren, if up to this time we have been granted a truce for further living, we are not dying as a result of our sin. In fact we are still living; we have not yet been condemned. Then, while we are alive, let us do what is ordered by our Father who will be our Judge; let us seek pardon from our brethren whom we have offended and, perhaps, wounded by sinning against them.

There are some persons who, though they are lowly in

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7 The text is quite vague at this point; there seems to be a lacuna or a faulty transmission.

8 Eph. 4.32.

the rating of this world, yet are lifted up in pride if one seeks pardon of them. This is what I advise in such a case. Sometimes a master sins against a servant. Even though he is the master and the other a servant, both are servants of another Master because both have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. Yet it seems hard that I should order and command that, if a master sins against his servant by unjustly quarreling or by unjustly striking him, the master should say: 'Forgive me; pardon me.' This seems hard, not because he ought not to do it, but because [the master fears] that the servant may become unbearably haughty. What then? Before the eyes of God let the master repent; before the eyes of God let him punish himself; and if he cannot say: 'Forgive me' to a servant because it is not fitting, let him address that servant graciously, for to accost one graciously is to ask for pardon.

(6) It remains now for me to address those against whom others have sinned and from whom the offenders have been unwilling to seek pardon. I have already spoken to those who were unwilling to forgive offenders who sought pardon. Now, then, since I address you all and since these are holy days, do not let your enmities remain. I suppose that some of you, who know that you have some differences with your brethren, have thought the matter over in your hearts and have found that, instead of your having sinned against them, they have sinned against you. Even though you do not say this to me now, because in this place it is my privilege to speak and yours to listen in silence, still, perhaps while thinking, you speak to yourselves and say: 'I wish to make peace, but he has injured me; he has sinned against me; and he does not wish to ask pardon.' What then? Am I going to say: 'Go to him and beg pardon of him'? Not at all. I do not wish you to lie. I do not want you who know that you have not sinned against your brother to say: 'Pardon me.' For how does it profit you to be your own prosecutor? Why would you seek pardon from him whom you have not of-

fended or against whom you have not sinned? That is of no use to you. I do not wish you to do it. You understand; you have examined the matter well; you know that he sinned against you, not you against him. 'I know,' he says.[9] Let your conscience rest in that definite knowledge. Do not go to your brother who has sinned against you and voluntarily ask pardon of him. There ought to be other peacemakers between you to exhort him earnestly to seek forgiveness from you; do you merely be ready to forgive him, ready to pardon him completely from your heart. If you are ready to forgive, you have already forgiven. You still have something to pray for; pray for him, that he may seek pardon from you. Because you realize that it is harmful for him if he does not seek forgiveness, pray for him that he may do so. Say to the Lord in your prayer: 'Lord, You know that I have not sinned against my brother and that he has sinned against me. You know, too, that his having sinned against me is harmful for him if he does not seek pardon from me. With a good intention, then, I beg You to pardon him.'

(7) Behold, I have told you that especially during these days of your fasts, of your pious practices, of your continency you ought to co-operate with me so as to make peace with your brethren. May I, who am saddened by your strife, rejoice in your peace, so that, forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another, we may in peace celebrate the Pasch and in peace observe the Passion of Him who, owing nothing to anyone, paid the price for those who were in debt. I refer to our Lord, Jesus Christ, who sinned against no man and against whom almost the entire world sinned. Yet He demanded no punishments but promised rewards. Therefore, we have Him as witness in our hearts that, if we have sinned against anyone, we are seeking pardon with sincere hearts and that, if anyone has sinned against us, we are prepared to give pardon and that we are praying for

9 These words seem spurious. The Mss. differ concerning them, but do not offer any satisfactory solution.

our enemies. Let us not expect to be avenged, my brethren. What does vengeance mean except to be delighted by another's misfortune? I know that each day men come, bend their knees, touch the earth with their foreheads, sometimes moisten their faces with tears, and in all this great humility and distress say: 'Lord, avenge me. Kill my enemy.' Certainly pray that the Lord may kill your enemy, but also pray that He may spare your brother. Let God destroy hostilities, but let Him save your brother's life. Pray that God may avenge you; let him who persecuted you perish; but let him remain who is restored to you.

FOR THE RECENT CONVERTS

Sermon 212

On the Presentation of the Creed

IT IS TIME for you to receive the Creed[1] which contains a brief summary of all that you believe for eternal salvation. We call it Creed or *symbolum,* transferring the term by a kind of simile, because merchants draw up for themselves a *symbolum* by which their alliance is held bound as by a pact of fidelity. Your union, moreover, is a spiritual fellowship, so that you are like traders seeking a valuable pearl,[2] that is, the charity which will be poured forth in your hearts by the Holy Spirit who will be given to you.[3] One makes progress toward this charity by faith in what is contained in the Creed: that you believe in God the Father Almighty, the invisible, immortal King of ages, the Creator of things visible and invisible; and in whatever else either sound reason or the authority of holy Scripture worthily tells us about Him. And do not separate the

1 According to the Louvain Codices, this sermon was delivered on the second feria after the fifth Sunday of Lent. However, the manuscripts differ as to the day on which the Creed was given to those about to be baptized. According to Roman custom, it, together with the Lord's Prayer, was given on the fourth feria of the fourth week of Lent and recited on Holy Saturday.

2 Cf. Matt. 13.45.

3 Cf. Rom. 5.5.

Son from the perfections of God, for those perfections of the Father are not to be mentioned in such a way as to be withdrawn from Him who said: 'I and the Father are one,'[4] and of whom the Apostle says: 'Who, though he was by nature God, did not consider it rapine to be equal to God.'[5] Now, rapine is the usurpation of another's property even though there be an equality in nature. In view of this, how will the Son not be omnipotent, since through Him all things were made and since He is also the Power and Wisdom of God,[6] of which it was written: 'Being but one, she can do all things'?[7] Moreover, in that form in which He is equal to the Father He is by nature invisible. In fact, the Word of God is invisible by nature because He was in the beginning and He was God.[8] In this same nature He is also completely immortal, that is, He remains immutable in every respect. For the human soul is also said to be immortal to a certain extent, but that is not genuine immortality in which there is such great change, making it possible to fail and to advance. Thus, it is death for the human soul to be severed from the life of God through the ignorance which is in the soul; but it is life for it to run to the fountain of life, so that in the light of God it may see light. Immediately after this life you, too, through the grace of Christ, will be restored from certain death which you renounce. But the Word of God, the only-begotten Son, always lives unchangeably with His Father. He neither decreases, because His abiding presence is not lessened; nor does He advance, because His perfection is not increased. He Himself is the Creator of the visible and invisible worlds, because, as the Apostle says: 'In him were created all things in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether Thrones, or Dominations, or Principalities, or Powers. All

4 John 10.30.
5 Cf. Phil. 2.6.
6 Cf. 1 Cor. 1.24.
7 Wisd. 7.27.
8 Cf. John 1.3,1.

things have been created through and unto him, . . . and in him all things hold together.'[9]

However, since He 'emptied himself,' not losing the nature of God, but 'taking the nature of a slave,'[10] He, the invisible, became visible in this form of a servant, because He was born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary. In this form of a servant, the Omnipotent One became weak, in that He suffered under Pontius Pilate. In this form of a servant, the Immortal One died, in that He was crucified and was buried. In this form of a servant, the King of ages rose on the third day. In this form of a servant, the Creator of things visible and invisible ascended into heaven, whence He had never departed. In this form of a servant, He who is the arm of the Father, and of whom the Prophet says: 'And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?'[11] sits at the right of the Father. In this form of a servant, He will come to judge the living and the dead, for in this form He wished to be a Companion of the dead inasmuch as He is the Life of the living. Through Him the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and by Himself, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, sent by both, begotten by neither; the unity of both, equal to both.

This Trinity is one God, omnipotent, invisible, King of ages, Creator of things visible and invisible. For we do not speak of three Lords, or of three Omnipotent Ones, or of three Creators or of three of whatever other perfections of God can be mentioned, because there are not three Gods but only one God. Although in this Trinity, the Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit the Son or the Father, yet the Father belongs to the Son; the Son, to the Father; and the Holy Spirit, to both the Father and the Son. Believe so that you may understand. For, unless you believe, you will not understand.[12] As a

9 Col. 1.16-18.
10 Phil. 2.7.
11 Isa. 53.1.
12 Cf. Isa. 7.9 (*secundum* Septuagint).

result of this faith, hope for grace by which all your sins will be forgiven. Only in this way and not by your own efforts will you be saved, for [salvation] is a gift of God. Furthermore, after this death, which comes to all men and which is incumbent upon the descendants of the first man, hope for the final resurrection of your bodies, not unto the endurance of pain to which the wicked will rise, nor unto the gratification of fleshly desires as the foolish think, but as the Apostle says: 'What is sown a natural body rises a spiritual body,'[13] so that it is no longer a 'load upon the soul'[14] nor does it seek any refreshment because it will experience no need.

(2) Therefore, I have given you a short sermon on the entire Creed as was obligatory. You will recognize that, in this short sermon of mine, all that you will hear in the Creed has been summarized. You should not write it out in any way, but, so as to hold the exact words of the Creed, learn it by listening. Not even when you have learned it should you write it down, but, rather, always hold it and cherish it in your memory. For whatever you will hear in the Creed is contained in the inspired books of the holy Scriptures. The fact that it is not permitted to write down what has been thus collected and reduced to a definite form comes about in memory of the promise of God in which, predicting a New Testament, He said in the words of the Prophet: 'This is the covenant which I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, by setting my law in their minds, I will write it also in their hearts.'[15] Because of the interpretation of this passage, the Creed is learned by listening; it is written, not on tablets nor on any material, but on the heart. He who has called you to His kingdom and glory will grant that, when you have been regenerated by His grace and by the Holy Spirit, it will be written in your hearts, so that you

13 I Cor. 15.44.
14 Wisd. 9.15.
15 Cf. Jer. 31.33.

may love what you believe and that, through love, faith may work in you and that you may become pleasing to the Lord God, the Giver of all good things, not by fearing His punishments in servile fashion, but by loving justice as true sons of God. This, therefore, is the Creed which has become familiar to you through the Scripture and through ecclesiastical sermons. Under this brief formula the faithful must live and advance.

Sermon 213

(1) The Creed is a rule of faith briefly compiled so as to instruct the mind without burdening the memory. It is expressed in few words, from which, however, much instruction may be drawn. 'I believe in God the Father Almighty.' See how quickly it is said and how much it signifies! God exists and He is the Father: God by His power; Father, by His goodness. How fortunate we are who have discovered that God is our Father! Let us, therefore, believe in Him, and let us promise ourselves all things from His mercy, because He is omnipotent. On that account we believe in God the Father Almighty. Let no one say: 'He is not able to forgive me my sins.' How can the Omnipotent lack that power? But you say: 'I have sinned much.' I answer: 'But He is omnipotent.' You insist: 'I have committed sins of such a nature that I cannot be freed or cleansed from them.' I reply: 'But He is omnipotent. See what you sing in the psalm: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all he hath done for thee. Who forgiveth all thy iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases." '[1]

In addition to all this, His omnipotence is necessary for us inasmuch as it was necessary for all creation in order that it might be created. He is omnipotent to make things great and small; He is omnipotent to make things heavenly and

1 Ps. 102.2-4.

earthly; He is omnipotent to make things immortal and mortal; He is omnipotent to make things spiritual and corporeal; He is omnipotent to make things visible and invisible; He is great amid great things and He is not small amid the smallest. In a word, He is omnipotent to make all things which He may have desired to make. But I also mention what He cannot do: He cannot die; He cannot sin; He cannot deceive; He cannot be deceived. Such things He cannot do; were He able to do those things, He would not be omnipotent. Therefore, believe in Him and extol Him, for 'with the heart a man believes unto justice, and with the mouth profession of faith is made unto salvation.'[2] It is fitting, then, that since you have believed you acknowledge it when you recite the Creed. Take now what you may keep for a time, and afterwards return, and never forget.

(2) After these introductory words, what follows? 'And in Jesus Christ.' You say: 'I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord.' If only Son, then equal to the Father; if only Son, then of the same substance as is the Father; if only Son, then of the same omnipotence as is the Father; if only Son, then co-eternal with the Father. All this He is in Himself, and with Himself, and with the Father. What is He for our sake? What is He to us? 'Who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.' Behold who comes, to whom He comes, and how. Through the Virgin Mary in whom, not an ordinary human husband, but the Holy Spirit operated, making the chaste one fruitful and preserving her chastity inviolate. Thus, therefore, the Lord Christ was clothed with human flesh; thus did He who made man become Man, by taking upon Himself what He was not without losing what He was. For 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'[3] The Word was not changed into flesh, but, remaining the Word after He had assumed flesh, He who had always been in-

2 Rom. 10.10.
3 John 1.14.

visible, became visible when He wished and He 'dwelt among us.' What does 'among us' mean? Among men. He, the one and only-begotten, became one of the multitude of men. He is the only-begotten of the Father; what is He in our regard? He is our only Saviour; no one except Him is our Saviour. And He is our only Redeemer; no one except Him has redeemed us, and that, not with gold or silver, but with His blood.

(3) Therefore, let us examine the transaction whereby we were bought. When these words were said in the Creed, 'Who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,' what did they signify as far as we are concerned? The words follow: 'He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.' He, who was the only Son of God, our Lord, was crucified; the only Son of God, our Lord, was buried. As man He was crucified; as man He was buried. But God was not changed; God was not annihilated, in spite of the fact that as man He was put to death. 'For had they known it,' says the Apostle, 'they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.'[4] He [the Apostle] thus declared that He was the Lord of glory; he admitted that He was crucified. Now, if anyone tears your tunic without harming your person, he does an injury to you. In regard to your garment, you do not exclaim and say: 'You have torn my tunic,' but you do say: 'You have torn me to pieces; you have made shreds of me.' Though unharmed, you make these complaints and rightly, although he who harmed you tore away none of your flesh. So, too, the Lord Christ was crucified. He is the Lord; He is the only Son of the Father; He is our Saviour; He is the Lord of glory. Yet He was crucified, but only in His human nature; and He was buried, but only in his human nature. For neither there where He was buried nor then when He was buried was His soul present. He lay in the tomb in flesh alone, and in spite of that you confess that He is Jesus Christ, the only Son of

4 1 Cor. 2.8.

God, our Lord. He who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary was Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord. He who was crucified under Pontius Pilate was Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord. He who was buried was Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord. Flesh alone lies there, and you say it is our Lord? Yes, I say so, and I say it emphatically because I look upon His clothing and I adore the One who was clothed with it. That flesh was His garment because He, 'though He was by nature God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be clung to, but emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave,' and without losing the nature of God, 'being made like unto men, and appearing in the form of man.'[5]

(4) Let us not despise this [abandoned flesh], for, when it lay there, then He purchased us. How did He purchase us? Because His flesh did not always lie there; 'He rose from the dead on the third day.' This follows in the Creed. When we have acknowledged His Passion, we also confess His Resurrection. What did He do in the Passion? He taught us why we suffer. What did He do in the Resurrection? He showed us why we hope. Here there is labor but there, reward; labor in the Passion, reward in the Resurrection. Nor, because He rose from the dead, did He remain here. What follows? 'He ascended into heaven.' And where is He now? 'He sits at the right hand of the Father.' Understand that it is the right hand; do not seek the left hand. Eternal happiness is called the right hand of God. Ineffable, inestimable, incomprehensible blessedness and prosperity are called the right hand of God. This place where He sits is the right hand of God. What does 'the place where He sits' mean? There where He dwells, for where each one dwells is called his seat. Inasmuch as St. Stephen saw Him, did he lie who said: 'He sits at the right hand of the Father'? For, in what sense does Stephen say: 'Behold, I see the heavens opened,

5 Phil. 2.6-8.

and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God'?[6] Because he [Stephen] saw Him standing, did he, perhaps, lie who said: 'He sits at the right hand of the Father'? Therefore, it has been expressed: He sits; He remains; He dwells. How? In the same way as you do. In what position? Who shall say? Let us say what He taught; let us say what we know.

(5) What follows in the Creed? 'Thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.' Let us acknowledge our Saviour; let us not fear our Judge. For he who now believes in Him, who obeys His commands, who loves Him, will not fear when He comes to judge the living and the dead. Not only will he not fear, but he will desire Him to come. As a matter of fact, what is more joyful for us than when one comes whom we desire, than when one comes whom we love? Yet, we may fear because He will be our Judge. He, who is now our Advocate, will then be our Judge. Hear what St. John says: 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity. . . . These things I have written to you in order that you may not sin. But if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just; and he is a propitiation for our sins.'[7] If you should have a case to be tried before a judge and should procure an advocate, you would be accepted by the lawyer and he would plead your case to the best of his ability. If, before he has finished his plea, you should hear that he is to be the judge, how you would rejoice because he could be your judge who shortly before was your lawyer! Now, the Lord Himself prays for us; He Himself intercedes for us. We have Him as Advocate; would we fear Him as Judge? Nay, rather, because we have sent Him ahead as our Advocate, let us hope that He will be our Judge.

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6 Acts 7.55.
7 Cf. 1 John 1.8-2.3.

(6) Those sections of the Creed which pertain to Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord, have been summarized. Now we continue: 'And [I believe] in the Holy Ghost,' so that the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit may be complete. Much has been said concerning the Son, because the Son assumed human form. Not the Father nor the Holy Spirit, but the Son, the Word, became flesh; the whole Trinity, however, made that flesh, for the operations of the Trinity are inseparable. Therefore, get such a clear understanding of the Holy Spirit that you will not believe Him to be less than the Father and less than the Son; for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit make up the Trinity, one God. In the Trinity there is nothing unlike, nothing different, nothing defective, nothing in one Person at variance with another; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are always equal, invisible, unchangeable. May the Holy Trinity free us from a multitude of sins!

(7) Now, that which follows pertains to us: 'I believe in the holy Church.' We constitute the Church, but I do not say 'we' in such a way as to include only those who are here, who now hear me. [I include] as many faithful Christians as are here, by the grace of God, in this church, that is, in this city, as many as are in this region, as many as are in this province, as many as are across the sea, as many as are in the whole world, since 'from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the name of the Lord is worthy of praise.'[8] Thus, the Catholic Church, our true mother, true bride of her Spouse, exists today. Let us honor her because she is the bride of so great a Lord. And what shall I say? Great and unique is the condescension of her Spouse; He found her a courtesan and made her a virgin.[9] She should not deny that she was a courtesan, lest she forget the mercy of her Liberator. How was she not a courtesan

8 Ps. 112.3.

9 St. Augustine here refers to the previous infidelity of the persons who made up the Church in his day.

when she committed fornication in the pursuit of idols and demons? Fornication of heart was in all; of the flesh in a few, but of the heart in all. And He came and made her a virgin; He made the Church a virgin. She is a virgin in faith. He has a few nuns, virgins in the flesh; He ought to have all, women and men alike, virgins in the faith. For there chastity, purity, and holiness ought to exist.

Do you wish to know how the Church is a virgin? Hear the Apostle Paul; hear the friend of the Bridegroom who is zealous, not for himself, but for the Bridegroom: 'I betrothed you to one spouse.' He spoke to the Church. To which Church? To all, whithersoever his letter could reach. 'I betrothed you to one spouse, that I might present you a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear lest,' he said, 'as the serpent seduced Eve by his guile . . .'[10] That serpent never physically defiled Eve, did he? Yet he did destroy her virginity of heart. On that account Paul said: 'I fear lest . . . your minds may be corrupted from that chastity which is in Christ.' Therefore, the Church is a virgin; she is a virgin, may she be a virgin. Let her beware of the deceiver, lest he turn out to be a corrupter. The Church is a virgin. Are you, perhaps, going to say to me: 'If the Church is a virgin, how does she bring forth children? Or, if she does not bring forth children, how did we give our names so that we might be born of her?' I answer: 'She is a virgin and she also brings forth children.' She imitates Mary who gave birth to the Lord. Did not the holy Mary bring forth her Child and remain a virgin? So, too, the Church both brings forth children and is a virgin. And if you would give some consideration to the matter, she brings forth Christ, because they who are baptized are His members. 'You are,' said the Apostle, 'the body of Christ and his members.'[11] If, therefore, the Church brings forth the members of Christ, she is very like to Mary.

10 Cf. 2 Cor. 11.2-4.
11 Cf. 1 Cor. 12.27.

(8) 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' If this power were not in the Church, there would be no hope; if there were no remission of sins in the Church, there would be no hope of future life and of eternal salvation. We give thanks to God who gave this gift to His Church. Behold, you are about to come to the sacred font; you will be washed in baptism; you will be renewed in the saving laver of regeneration; when you rise from these waters, you will be without sin. All the sins which in the past haunted you will be wiped out. Your sins will be like the Egyptians following the Israelites, pursuing only up to the Red Sea.[12] What does 'up to the Red Sea' mean? Up to the font consecrated by the cross and blood of Christ. For, because that font is red, it reddens. Do you not see how the member of Christ becomes red? Question the eyes of faith. If you see the cross, see the blood, too. If you see what hangs on the cross, see what drips down from it. The side of Christ was pierced with a lance and our purchase price flowed forth.[13] Therefore, baptism is signified by the sign of Christ, that is, by the water in which you are immersed and through which you pass, as it were, in the Red Sea. Your sins are your enemies. They follow you, but only to the Red Sea. When you have entered [the water], you will escape; they will be destroyed, just as the Egyptians were engulfed by the waters while the Israelites escaped on dry land. And why does Scripture say: 'There was not one of them left'?[14] Because, whether you have committed many or few, great or small sins, even the smallest of them has not remained. But, since we are destined to live in this world where no one lives without sin, on that account the remission of sin depends, not solely on the washing in holy baptism, but also on the Lord's daily prayer which you will receive after eight days. In that prayer you will find, as it were, your daily baptism, so that you may give thanks

12 Cf. Exod. 14.
13 Cf. John 19.34.
14 Ps. 105.11.

to God who has given to His Church this gift which we acknowledge in the Creed. Hence, when we have said: 'I believe in the holy Church,' let us add, 'and in the remission of sins.'

(9) After these words we say: 'And in the resurrection of the body.' That, then, is the end. But the resurrection of the body will be an end without end. After that there will be no death of the body, no difficulties of the body, no hunger and thirst of the body, no afflictions of the body, no old age and weariness of the body. Do not, therefore, shudder at the resurrection of the body. See its good aspects; forget the evil. As a matter of fact, whatever bodily complaints there are now will not exist then. We shall be immortal, equal to the angels of God.[15] We shall have one city along with the angels; we shall be possessed by the Lord; we shall be His inheritance and He shall be our inheritance, as we ourselves say now: 'The Lord is the portion of my inheritance.'[16] And, concerning us, that promise was made to God's Son: 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance.'[17] We shall possess and we shall be possessed; we shall hold and we shall be held. What shall I say? We are cherished and we cherish. But we cherish God and we are cherished as a field. That you may know how we are cherished, hear the Lord saying: 'I am the true vine; you are the branches; my Father is the husbandman.'[18] If He is called a husbandman, He cultivates a field. What field? He cultivates us. The farmer of this visible earth can plow; he can dig; he can plant; he can irrigate if he has found water. But can he give the increase, produce the seed in the ground, set the roots, raise the plants to the breezes, give strength to the branches, load them with fruit, adorn them with leaves? Can a farmer do these things? But our Husband-

15 Cf. Matt. 22.30.
16 Ps. 15.5.
17 Ps. 2.8.
18 Cf. John 15.1,5.

man, God our Father, can do all these things in us. Why? Because we believe in God the Father Almighty. Therefore, hold what we have set before you and what we have explained as to how God has deigned to give.

Sermon 214

(1) In consideration of my own lack of age and training, and of my inexperience in this office which I have received, and in view of my affection for you, I, who now assist as priest at this altar which you will soon approach, should not deprive you of the ministry of a sermon.[1] The Apostle says: 'For if thou confess with thy mouth that Jesus is the Lord, and believe in thy heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart a man believes unto justice, and with the mouth profession of faith is made unto salvation.'[2] The Creed builds up in you what you ought to believe and confess in order to be saved. Indeed, these truths, which you are about to receive and which should be entrusted to your memory and professed in your speech, are neither new nor unfamiliar to you, for you are accustomed to hear them set forth in various ways in the holy Scriptures and in sermons delivered in the church. But now they are to be handed over to you gathered together, arranged in a fixed order, and condensed so that your faith may be well grounded and preparation made for your manifestation of that faith without taxing your memory. These are the truths which you are going to hold in mind assiduously and recite from memory. (After this introduction, the whole Creed is to be said, without interposing any explanation, in this way: 'I believe in God the Father Almighty' and the other sections which follow, ending with the reminder: 'You

1 It is thought that this is the first sermon delivered by St. Augustine after his ordination to the priesthood at Hippo in 391.
2 Rom. 10.9-11.

know that it is not customary to write the Creed.' To this preface the following discussion is to be added.)[3]

(2) You are under an obligation not only to believe these truths which you have heard summarized, but also to commit them to memory in just so many words and to give oral expression to them. Furthermore, since these truths have to be protected against persons who have conflicting opinions and who, held in bondage by the Devil, menace the faith by opposing eternal salvation, remember to believe that God's omnipotence is such that there is no nature at all which He did not create. On that account He punishes sin, which He did not create, because it defiles nature which He did create. Therefore, He, the omnipotent God, made all creatures, visible and invisible: whatever by a rational mind can become a sharer in unchangeable truth, such as the angels and men; whatever lives and is sentient, even though it may lack understanding, such as all creatures on earth, in the waters, in the air, those that walk, creep, swim or fly; whatever is said to live in a fashion without intelligence and without sense perception, such as those things which are fastened by roots in the earth and which, by sprouting, push forth and rise into the air; whatever by physical mass alone occupies space, such as stones and whatever elements of earthly structure are perceived or even touched—all these the omnipotent God created, joining the highest and lowest to the middle and assigning to suitable times and places all that He created. Moreover, He did not make these things from material which He Himself did not create; nor did He fashion what somebody else had made. He Himself created what He fashioned.

How does he who says that it is impossible to make something out of nothing believe what the omnipotent God has done? Of course, he undoubtedly denies that God is omni-

3 These words were evidently inserted later by a copyist. A reference to the custom of not writing the Creed has already appeared in Sermon 212.

potent, since he says that God could not make the world if He did not have the material with which to make it. Now, what omnipotence is there where so much need exists that, like any ordinary workman, He could not bring His work to completion without help of material which He Himself did not create? From such views and errors, therefore, let him who believes in an omnipotent God purge himself. As a matter of fact, that which is called the formless stuff of things[4] is capable of receiving form, is subject to the work of the Creator, and can be transformed into all things which the Creator has willed to make. God did not find material, as it were, co-eternal with Himself from which to make the world; He Himself created it from nothing at all at the same time as the things which he made from it. The material did not exist before the things which were evidently made from it. Hence, in the beginning, the omnipotent God made all things from nothing, at the same time creating the matter from which they were fashioned. The matter of heaven and earth, since they were created in the beginning, was created along with them; nor was there anything previously in existence from which would come those things which God made in the beginning. Nevertheless, those things were made which the omnipotent God created and which, when created, He set in place, completed, and adorned. Now, if God created from nothing at all those things which He made in the beginning, He is able to do whatever He pleases with those things which He has made, because He is all powerful.

Let not the wicked believe that God is not omnipotent because people do many things contrary to His wishes, for, when they do what He does not wish, He is doing just what He wishes with them. In no way, therefore, do men change or prevail over the will of the Omnipotent One. For instance, whether a man is condemned justly or freed mercifully, the will of the Omnipotent One is fulfilled. Therefore, the only

4 Cf. Lucretius, *De rerum natura,* 1.483-550 *et passim.*

thing the Omnipotent One cannot do is that which He does not will to do. He makes use of the wicked, then, not according to their depraved will but according to His own just desires. For, as the evil make bad use of their own good nature, that is, His good work, so He Himself, being good, makes good use of their evil deeds, lest the will of the Omnipotent One be prevailed over in any respect. For, if He, being good, did not have the power to produce justice and goodness from their evil deeds, under no circumstances would He permit them to be born or to live. He did not make them evil even though He created mankind, because He created their natures, not the sins which are contrary to nature. Nevertheless, being omniscient, He could not be ignorant of the fact that they would be evil; but just as He was aware of the evil that they would commit, so He was aware of the good that He would accomplish through them. Who would explain in human speech, who would do justice in human praise to the great good which the Passion of our Saviour brought to us when His blood was poured out in remission of sins? Yet, this so great a good was accomplished through the malice of the Devil, through the malice of the Jews, and through the malice of Judas, the betrayer. Nevertheless, the good which, through their instrumentality, God, not they, brought to men is not justly assigned to them; but the punishment is justly assigned to them because they wished to do harm. Moreover, as we have been able to discover arguments which have thrown light on how God made good use of the evil deeds of the Jews and of Judas the betrayer for our redemption and salvation, so in all creation with its hidden and secret places of concealment which we penetrate by keenness neither of vision nor of mind, one realizes how God makes good use of evils so that His omnipotent will is fulfilled in all things which are produced and administered in this world.

(4) Since I have stated that the omnipotent God is not able to do only that which He does not will to do, let no

one think that I have rashly declared that there was something which the Almighty could not do. The blessed Apostle likewise says: 'If we are faithless, he who remains faithful cannot disown himself.'[5] Because He does not will this He cannot do it, inasmuch as He cannot will and not will at the same time. For justice cannot wish to do what is unjust; wisdom cannot wish what is foolish; truth cannot wish what is false. Whence we are reminded that the omnipotent God cannot do not only what the Apostle states: 'He cannot disown himself,' but many other things as well. Behold, I say this and I dare to say it in accordance with His truth, because I do not dare to deny that the omnipotent God cannot die, cannot be changed, cannot be deceived, cannot become wretched, cannot be overcome. Far be it that the Omnipotent One should be able to do these things and other things of this sort. And for that very reason not only does truth show that He is omnipotent because He cannot do these things, but truth also concludes that he who can do such things is not omnipotent. For God exists, willing whatever He is; therefore, He wills to be eternal, unchangeable, true, beautiful, and insuperable. If, then, what He does not will can exist, He is not omnipotent. But He is omnipotent; therefore, whatever He wishes can be. And for that reason whatever He does not wish cannot be. Wherefore He is said to be omnipotent, since whatever He wishes can be. Of Him the Psalmist says: 'Whatever he hath pleased he hath done, in heaven and on earth.'[6]

(5) The omnipotent God, therefore, who hath done all things whatsoever He wished, brought forth, not from nothing, but from Himself, His only Word by whom all things were made. On that account, He did not make, but generated, Him. For 'in the beginning [He] created heaven, and earth.'[7] But He did not create the Word in the beginning,

5 Cf. 2 Tim. 2.13.
6 Cf. Ps. 134.6.
7 Cf. Gen. 1.1.

because 'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God.'[8] He [the Word] is God of God. The Father is God, but not of God. The Word is the only-begotten Son of God, because there is no other Son of the substance of the Father, co-eternal with and equal to the Father. He, God, is the Word, not like a word whose sound can be planned in the mind and produced in the mouth, but as an utterance which cannot be expressed in a briefer or better fashion. 'The Word was God.' Unchangeably remaining with the Father, He is unchangeable also with the Father, for of Him the Apostle says: 'Who though he was by nature God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be clung to.'[9] Obviously, being equal to God was His prerogative by nature not by theft. So, we believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God the Father, our Lord.

(6) But, because He, who in the nature of God by whom we were created 'did not consider being equal to God a thing to be clung to' in His effort to seek and to save that which was lost, 'emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave and being made like unto men, appearing in the form of man,'[10] we believe that He was born[11] of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary. Each of His two nativities is marvelous, both the divine and the human. The former is of the Father without a mother; the latter, of a mother without a father. The one is without the limits of time; the other, in an acceptable time. The one is eternal; the other, timely. The one in the bosom of the Father is without a body; the other, with a body by which the virginity of His Mother was not violated. The one is without sex; the other without man's co-operation. Moreover, we say that He was born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary because when the

8 John 1.1.
9 Phil. 2.6.
10 Phil. 2.6-8.
11 The reading of Ms. Theodericensis, *sic credimus quod natus sit,* has been followed here.

holy Virgin had asked of the angel: 'How shall this happen?' he answered: 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.' Then he added: 'And therefore the Holy One to be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.'[12] His words are not: 'The Child to be born of thee shall be called the Son of the Holy Spirit.' For, as a matter of fact, complete manhood, that is, rational soul and body, was assumed by the Word so that the Word, the Son of God, might be not only Christ, not only God, but also Man, being in His entirety the Son of God the Father because He is the Word, and the Son of Man because of His humanity. By reason of the fact that He is the Word, He is equal to the Father; by reason of the fact that He is Man, the Father is greater than He. At the same time that He is Man, He is the Son of God because He is the Word by whom human nature was assumed; at the same time that He is the Word, He is the Son of Man because of the human nature assumed by the Word. Because of His holy conception in the Virgin's womb, effected, not through burning concupiscence of the flesh, but through ardent charity of faith, He is said to have been born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary in such a way that the former was concerned, not with His generation, but with His sanctification and the latter, with His conception and parturition. 'Therefore,' the angel said, 'the Holy One to be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' Because He is 'holy,' therefore He is of the Holy Spirit; because He is 'to be born of thee,' therefore He is of the Virgin Mary; because He is the Son of God, therefore 'the Word was made flesh.'[13]

(7) Moreover, it was fitting that, in His assumed humanity, not only the Invisible One should become visible and that He, co-eternal with the Father, should be born in time, but also that the Untouchable One should be bound, the In-

12 Luke 1.34,35.
13 John 1.14.

superable One should be suspended on the wood of the cross, the Inviolable One should be pierced with nails, and that both Life and the Immortal One should die upon a cross and be buried in a tomb. This entirety is the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. Whence it follows that we believe in our hearts unto justice and proclaim with our lips unto salvation that this same only-begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, was not only born as Man of a woman, but also that He endured human sufferings even unto death and burial. For, since the only-begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, in His entirety is the Word and Man or, to speak more precisely, the Word, soul and body, then in reference to His entirety is the statement made that in His soul only was He 'sad, even unto death,'[14] because Jesus Christ the only Son of God was sad. In reference to His entirely is the statement made that He was crucified in His humanity alone, since Jesus Christ the only Son of God was crucified. Likewise, in reference to His entirety is the statement made that He was buried in His human nature alone. For, from the moment at which we say that we believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, from that moment whatever else we say about Him is attributed to Jesus Christ our Lord, the only Son of God. Do not be surprised at this, for, even though only His body was buried, we say that the only Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord was buried, in just the same way that we say today, for example, that the Apostle Peter lies in the tomb and, although we may say that very truthfully, we add that he rejoices with Christ in eternal rest. Obviously, we are speaking of one and the same Apostle, for there are not two Apostles named Peter, but only one. Therefore, we say of one and the same person that in his body only he lies in the tomb and that in spirit alone he rejoices with Christ. Moreover, the words 'under Pontius Pilate' are added either to establish the truth about the time or to give further commendation to the

14 Cf. Matt. 26.38.

humility of Christ, because He who is to come with such great power as judge of the living and the dead endured such great sufferings under a human judge.

(8) On the third day He rose again, in flesh truly His own, but destined in nowise to suffer death again. This fact His disciples accepted on the testimony of their eyes and hands; such great goodness would not take advantage of their faith, nor would such great truth deceive them. For the sake of brevity we add immediately that He ascended into heaven. As a matter of fact, He remained forty days with His disciples, lest, if He were to withdraw quickly from their vision, this tremendous miracle of His Resurrection would be considered a mockery. He now sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven. We ought to give careful consideration to this fact with the eyes of faith to prevent the impresssion that He is immovably fixed in any spot so as not be permitted to stand or to walk. For, the fact that St. Stephen said that he saw Him standing[15] does not mean that St. Stephen's vision was distorted or that his statement is at variance with the words of this Creed. Far be such a thought, far be such a statement from us! The Lord's dwelling in lofty and ineffable blessedness has merely been expressed in this way to indicate that He dwells there. In the same fashion, dwellings are called 'seats,' just as, when we ask where someone is, we receive the answer: 'In his seat.' Furthermore, the expression is very frequently used, especially in reference to the servants of God, in this way: 'For so many years he sat in this or that monastery,' that is, he found refuge, he sojourned, he dwelt there. Nor is this form of expression unknown in the holy Scriptures. In fact, after King Solomon ordered Semei to dwell in the city of Jerusalem and, in addition, threatened that, if at any time he dared to depart thence, he would pay the just punishment, Semei is said to have had his seat (*ekáthise*) there for three years,[16] by

15 Cf. Acts 7.55.
16 Cf. 3 Kings 2.36-40.

which we understand that he dwelt there. The words 'right hand of the Father' certainly do not refer to the structure of the human body, as if the Father would be at the left of the Son when, according to the corporeal structure of the human members, the Son is at the right hand of the Father. On the contrary, this phrase 'at the right hand of God' bespeaks an indescribable height of honor and happiness. In the same way, we read this passage about Wisdom: 'His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.'[17] For, if earthly ease has been scorned here below, then eternal blessedness embraces one from above.

(9) Therefore, from the lofty habitation of the heavens where, at this moment, His now immortal body dwells, our Lord Jesus Christ will come to judge the living and the dead according to the indisputable angelic testimony recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. For, as the disciples of the Lord watched Him ascending into heaven and followed Him with intent gaze, they heard the angels say: 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand here? This Jesus who has been taken up from you shall come in the same way as you have seen him going up to heaven.'[18] (Human presumption in many different aspects has been checked.[19]) Christ will come to judge in that form in which He was judged. For it was in that form that the Apostles saw Him ascending into heaven when they heard that He would come again in like manner. That form will be visible to the living and the dead, to the good and to the evil, whether we understand that, under the name of the living, the good are mentioned, and the evil, under the name of the dead; or whether we consider as living, those whom He on His arrival will find living and as dead, those whom His presence will arouse, as He Himself states in the Gospel when He says: 'For the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear his voice. And they who have done good shall come forth unto resurrection of life;

17 Cf. Cant. 2.6.
18 Cf. Acts 1.11.
19 This sentence seems to be an interpolation.

but they who have done evil unto resurrection of judgment.'[20] In this human form the good will see Him in whom they have believed; the wicked, Him whom they have despised. But the wicked will not see Him in the form of God in which He is equal to the Father, for as the Prophet says: 'The wicked shall be taken off that he may not see the glory of the Lord,'[21] and, on the other hand, 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.'[22] These conclusive statements have been made [in the Creed] concerning Jesus Christ our Lord the only Son of God.

(10) We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father without, however, being the Son; who rests upon the Son without, however, being the Father of the Son; who receives of what is the Son's without, however, being the Son of the Son;[23] but who is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, the Holy Spirit, God Himself. For, if He were not God, He would not have such a temple as the Apostle mentions: 'Do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit [who is] in you, whom you have from God?'[24] They are the temple, not of a creature, but of the Creator. Far be from us the possibility of being the temple of a creature, since the Apostle says: 'For holy is the temple of God, and this temple you are.'[25] In the Trinity there is nothing in one Person greater or less than in another; there is no separation of operations; there is no dissimilarity of substance; but there is one Father who is God, one Son who is God, one Holy Spirit who is God. Nevertheless, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three Gods, but only one God, not in such a way that it is the Father who is the Son, or the Son who is the Father, or the Holy Spirit who is either the Father or the Son, but so that the Father is

20 Cf. John 5.28-30.
21 Cf. Isa. 26.10 (*secundum* Septuagint).
22 Matt. 5.8.
23 John 15.26; 1.32; 16.14.
24 Cf. 1 Cor. 6.19.
25 1 Cor. 3.17.

Father of the Son, the Son is Son of the Father, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Thus, each is God and the Trinity is one God. May this belief imbue your hearts and guide you in professing it. On hearing this, believe so that you may understand, so that by putting into practice what you believe you may be able to understand it.

(11) Honor, love and praise the holy Church, your mother, the heavenly Jerusalem, the holy City of God. It is she who, in this faith which you have received, bears fruit and spreads throughout the world.[26] She is the 'Church of the living God, the pillar and mainstay of truth,'[27] who, in dispensing the sacraments, tolerates the wicked who are eventually to be separated and whom, meanwhile, disparity of customs keeps at a distance. For the sake of the grain now growing amid the chaff, at the final sifting of which the harvest destined for the granary will be revealed, the Church has received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, so that in her there may be remission of sins through the blood of Christ and the operation of the Holy Spirit. In this Church the soul which was dead in sins will live again so that it may be stirred to life in Christ by whose grace we have been saved.

(12) We should have no doubt that our mortal flesh also will rise again at the end of the world. 'For this corruptible body must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal body must put on immortality. What is sown in corruption rises in incorruption; what is sown in dishonor rises in glory; . . . what is sown a natural body rises a spiritual body.'[28] This is the Christian faith; this, the Catholic faith; this, the apostolic faith. Believe Christ when He says: 'Not a hair of your head shall perish,'[29] and, putting aside all unbelief, consider how valuable you are. For how can our Redeemer

26 Cf. Col. 1.6.
27 1 Tim. 3.15.
28 1 Cor. 15.53,42-45.
29 Luke 21.18.

despise any person, when He cannot despise a hair of that person's head? And how are we going to doubt that He intends to give eternal life to our soul and body since He assumed a soul and body in which to die for us, which He laid down for us when He died and which He took up again that we might not fear death?

I have disclosed to your Charity,[30] my brethren, all the truths which are handed down in the Creed for our guidance. For this reason the Creed is called the *symbolum* because in it the approved belief of our fellowship is contained and by its profession, as by a password, the faithful Christian is recognized. Amen.

Sermon 215

At the Recitation of the Creed

(1) The Creed of most holy martyrdom,[1] which you received as a group and which you have recited today as individuals, contains the truths upon which the faith of Mother Church is solidly established as on a firm foundation, which is Christ the Lord. 'For other foundation no one can lay, but that which has been laid, which is Christ Jesus.'[2] Accordingly, you have received and recited what you ought always to hold in your mind and heart so that you may say it on your couches, think it over on the streets,

30 In St. Augustine's day, qualities associated with persons in ecclesiastical or civil offices suggested the corresponding abstract nouns as titles of address. Many of these became stereotyped and purely conventional. Both *Charitas* and *Sanctitas* were used not only in addressing bishops and clergy, but also in speaking to the laity. See Sister M. Bridget, *Titles of Address in Christian Epistolography* (Washington, D.C. 1930) 34,52.

1 The reading *martyrii symbolum* as given in Migne has been followed here, since it is supported by the oldest codex of the Sermons. It is understood as a reference to the martyrdom suffered for professing the faith.

2 1 Cor. 3.11.

be mindful of it when eating, and, even when your body sleeps, guard it in your hearts. For, renouncing the Devil, his pomps, and his angels, and withdrawing your mind and your soul from them, you ought to forget the past. Despising the duration of your former life, you ought by holy practices to renew your natural life along with the new spiritual man. As the Apostle says, you ought to press on toward the prize of God's heavenly call, forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is before you.[3] You ought to believe what you do not as yet see, so that you may deservedly come to that which you have believed. 'For how can a man hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.'[4]

(2) This, then, is our faith and our rule of salvation, namely, that we believe in God the Father Almighty, the Creator of all things, the King of ages, immortal and invisible. In fact, He is the omnipotent God who, in the beginning of the world, created all things from nothing; who is before all ages; who made and directs all ages. For He is not augmented by time; He is not extended in place; nor is He confined or limited by any material substance. On the contrary, with Himself and in Himself He remains a full and perfect Eternity which human thought cannot grasp nor human speech utter. Inasmuch as 'eye has not seen or ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man'[5] [to conceive] the reward which God promises to His saints, how can the mind represent, the heart consider, or the tongue discuss Him who makes such a promise?

(3) We also believe in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God of true God, God the Son of God the Father, but not two Gods, for He and the Father are one.[6] Through Moses God introduces Himself to His people, saying: 'Hear,

3 Cf. Phil. 3.13-15.
4 Rom. 8.24-26.
5 1 Cor. 2.9.
6 Cf. John 10.30.

O Israel, the precepts of life; the Lord your God is one God.'[7] Moreover, if you wish to consider how the eternal Son of the eternal Father was generated without the limits of time, the Prophet Isaias confutes you, saying: 'Who shall declare his generation?'[8] And so, you will be able neither to consider nor to discuss the generation of God from God; you are permitted only to believe so that you may be able to be saved, as the Apostle says: 'For he who comes to God must believe that God exists and that he will be a rewarder to those who seek him.'[9] But if you desire to know about His nativity according to the flesh which for our salvation He deigned to assume, hear and believe that He was born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary. Yet, who shall declare this nativity of His, either? For who can worthily appraise the fact that God wished to be born for the sake of men; that a virgin conceived without man's co-operation; that she brought forth her Child without corruption; and that she remained a virgin after childbirth? As a matter of fact, our Lord Jesus Christ in His condescension entered the Virgin's womb, without stain impregnated a woman's members, without corruption made His Mother fertile, and, when formed, came forth from her, preserving intact His Mother's body so that He might fill with the honor of maternity and with the holiness of virginity her from whom He deigned to be born. Who ponders this? Who talks about this? Who, then, shall declare this nativity of His? For, whose mind is adequate to consider, whose tongue is capable of declaring not only that 'in the beginning was the Word' without having had any beginning by way of birth, but also that the 'Word was made flesh,'[10] choosing the Virgin whom He would make His Mother, making her His Mother whom He would preserve as a virgin; being the Son of God with no mother

7 Cf. Deut. 6.4.
8 Isa. 53.8.
9 Cf. Heb. 11.6.
10 John 1.1,14.

conceiving Him, being the Son of Man with no father co-operating; bringing fertility to His Mother on His coming, but not depriving her of integrity on His birth? What is this? Who shall say? Who shall be silent about it? Wonderful to relate, we are not permitted to be silent about what we are not capable of expressing. By our speech we praise what we do not grasp in our thoughts. In fact, we cannot discuss so great a gift of God because we are too insignificant to declare His greatness. Nevertheless, we are compelled to praise, lest by preserving silence we remain ungrateful. But, thanks to be God because what cannot be adequately expressed can be faithfully believed.

(4) Accordingly, we believe in Jesus Christ our Lord who was born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary. That blessed Mary, by believing, conceived Him whom she, by believing, brought forth. For, after she was promised a Son, she inquired how this would happen since she knew not man and since the only way of knowing man and of giving birth known to her, although she herself had not experienced it but had learned about it from other women, was that, in the normal course of nature, a child was born of man and woman. She received this response from the angel: 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' When the angel had answered thus, she, full of faith and conceiving Christ in her mind before she did so in her womb, said: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word.'[11] 'Be it done,' she said. 'Let Him, conceived in a virgin without man's co-operation, be born of the Holy Spirit and of an inviolate woman, and in Him let an unspotted Church be born of the Holy Spirit.' Let the Holy One to be born of a human mother without a human father be called the Son of God, since it was fitting that He who was born of the Father without any mother

11 Cf. Luke 1.34-36,38.

should, in marvelous fashion, become the Son of Man. So that as a little One He might issue from her inviolate body, He was born in that human form in which, after His Resurrection, He would, as a grown Man, enter [the Cenacle] through closed doors. These happenings are wondrous because they are divine; they are ineffable because they are unfathomable; the mouth of man is not capable of explaining them because the heart of man cannot plumb their depths. Mary believed, and that which she believed was accomplished in her. Let us, also, believe, so that what has been accomplished may be able to benefit us. Therefore, although this nativity is also marvelous, consider, O man, what your God undertook for your sake, what your Creator undertook for you, a creature, namely, that God remaining in God, living eternally with the Eternal, as Son equal to the Father, did not disdain to take the nature of a slave in behalf of guilty and sinful slaves. Nor was this action occasioned by our human merits. On the contrary, we merited punishments for our iniquities; but, if He had observed our iniquities, who would have endured it? Consequently, for wicked men and sinful slaves the Lord became Man; He deigned to be born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary.

(5) Perhaps it may seem a small thing to you that God, for the sake of men, that the Just for the sake of sinners, that the Innocent for the sake of the accused, that the King for the sake of captives, that the Lord for the sake of servants came, clothed in the flesh of humanity, was seen on earth, and conversed with men. But, over and above all that, He was crucified, died, and was buried. Do you not believe this? You say, perhaps: 'When was this done?' Hear when it was done—under Pontius Pilate. As a corroboration for you, the name of the judge has been set down lest you should doubt about the exact time. Believe, then, that the Son of God was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried. 'Greater love than this,' moreover, 'no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends.'[12] Are you wondering about that 'no one'?

12 John 15.13.

Yes, I say, no one at all. This is true; Christ has said it. Let us question the Apostle and let him also answer us.[13] 'Christ,' he says, 'died for the wicked.' And again he says: 'When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.'

Behold, therefore, in Christ we find greater love because He laid down His life, not for friends, but for His enemies. How great, then, is the love of God for men and how great is His desire to love even sinners since He died for love of them! These are the words of the Apostle: 'He commends his charity towards us, because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us.' Then, believe this and, for the sake of your salvation, do not be ashamed to admit it, for 'with the heart a man believes unto justice, and with the mouth profession of faith is made unto salvation.' Lastly, lest you should be in doubt, lest you should be ashamed, when you first believed, you received the sign of the cross on your forehead, as it were, on a house of shame. Think of your blessed forehead now, lest you fear the tongue of others. The Lord Himself said: 'For whoever is ashamed of me before men, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him before the angels of God.'[14] Do not, then, be ashamed of the ignominy of the cross which God Himself did not hesitate to take up for your sake; and say with the Apostle: 'But as for me, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'[15] This same Apostle gives this advice to you: 'For I have determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.'[16] He who was then crucified by one nation is now fixed in the hearts of all nations.

(6) Whoever you are who prefer to boast about [His] power rather than about [His] lowliness, be consoled; be joyful. He who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried arose from the dead on the third day. Perhaps you

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13 Cf. Rom. 5.6,8,10.
14 Cf. Mark 8.38.
15 Gal. 6.14.
16 1 Cor. 2.2.

are now in doubt and trepidation. When I said to you: 'Believe that He was born, that He suffered, was crucified, died and was buried,' you believed these things rather easily concerning Him as a Man; do you doubt now, O man, because I say: 'On the third day He rose again from the dead'? That I may furnish you with but one argument from many, focus your attention on God; consider that He is omnipotent; and do not doubt. For, if He could make you from nothing when you did not exist, why could He not raise from the dead His own humanity which He had already created? Therefore, my brethren, believe. Where faith is concerned, there is no need of resorting to lengthy discussion. It is this belief alone which distinguishes and separates Christians from all men. For pagans now believe and the Jews then saw that Jesus died and was buried; but neither pagan nor Jew grants that He rose from the dead on the third day. Therefore, the resurrection of the dead distinguishes the life of faith from the faithless dead. The Apostle Paul, too, when he was writing to Timothy, said: 'Remember that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.'[17] Let us believe, then, my brethren, and let us hope that what was done in the case of Christ will be done in our case, also, because God who promises it does not deceive.

(7) After He rose from the dead He ascended into heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God the Father. Even now, perhaps, you do not believe. Then hear the Apostle: 'He who descended, he it is who ascended also above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.'[18] Be on your guard lest you experience the judgment of Him in whose resurrection you are unwilling to believe. In fact, 'he who has not believed is already judged,'[19] for He who now sits at the right hand of the Father as an advocate for us will come thence to judge both the living and the dead. Let us believe,

17 2 Tim. 2.8.
18 Eph. 4.10.
19 Cf. John 3.18.

therefore, so that whether we live or whether we die we may be the Lord's.[20]

(8) Let us also believe in the Holy Spirit, for He is God, because it is written: 'God is spirit.'[21] Through Him we receive remission of sins; through Him we believe in the resurrection of the body; through Him we hope for eternal life. But see to it lest you become involved in error by your calculation and think that I said there are three Gods because I mentioned the one God three times. In the Trinity there is one substance of the deity, one strength, one power, one majesty, one name of divinity, as Christ Himself said to His disciples when He had risen from the dead: 'Go, baptize the Gentiles,' not in several names, but in one 'name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.'[22] Believing, then, in the divine Trinity and threefold Unity, my dearly beloved, beware lest anyone draw you away from the faith and unity of the Catholic Church. 'For if anyone has preached a gospel to you other than that which you have received, let him be anathema.' Hear, not me, but the Apostle who says: 'But even if we or an angel from heaven have preached otherwise to you than that which you have received, let him be anathema.'[23]

(9) You undoubtedly see, my dearly beloved, how even in the very words of the holy Creed, as a conclusion to all the beliefs which pertain to the mystery of faith, a certain addition has been made so that the words 'through the Holy Church' might be used. Avoid, therefore, as much as possible, the various separated deceivers whose sects and names, in view of their large number, would take too long to mention now. As a matter of fact, I have many things to say to you, but you are not able to bear them just now. One thing I commend to your prayers, namely, that you turn away your

20 Cf. Rom. 14.8.
21 John 4.24.
22 Cf. Matt. 28.19.
23 Cf. Gal. 1.9,8.

mind and your attention in every respect from him who is not a Catholic, so that you may be able to gain remission of sins, resurrection of the body, and life everlasting through the one, true, and holy Catholic Church, in which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are presented as one God to whom be honor and glory forever and ever.

Sermon 216

To the Seekers [of Baptism]

(1) The beginnings of my ministry[1] and of your conception, when by heavenly grace you are beginning to be generated in the womb, ought to be sustained by prayer[2] that my sermon may be beneficial in exhorting you and that your conception may be of service in consoling me. I instruct by discourses; do you advance in good works. I scatter the teaching[3] of the word; do you render the fruit of faith. Let us all run in His way and path according to the vocation in which we have been called by the Lord; let no one look back. For Truth, who neither can nor does deceive, declares openly: 'No one, putting his hand on the plow and looking back will be fit for the kingdom of God.'[4] Indeed, your very name, since you are called '*competentes*,' shows that you desire this, that you are striving for this with all the energy of your mind. As a matter of fact, what else are '*competentes*' but persons seeking something together? For, just as '*condocentes*,' '*concurrentes*,' and '*considentes*'

1 This, along with Sermon 214, seems to have been delivered in 391, when St. Augustine was ordained to the priesthood at Hippo.

2 The readings *incipitis* and *oratione* instead of *concipitis* and *ore* have been followed here in accordance with the suggestion in the footnote of Migne, *PL* 38.1077.

3 It would seem that *semen* would suit the context here instead of *sermonem*; cf. the following column (1078), where *semen verbi* is used.

4 Cf. Luke 9.62.

signify nothing but persons teaching together, running together, and sitting together, so the name '*competentes*' was compounded for no other reason than to indicate that these persons are seeking one and the same thing at the same time. And what is that one thing which you seek or desire, except what a certain fearless person cried out when carnal desires had been conquered and the terrors of the world had been overcome, namely: 'If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. If a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident.' And, explaining what that is, the Psalmist says in addition: 'One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.' Furthermore, describing the happiness of this region and abode, he goes on to say: 'That I may behold the delight of the Lord, and may be protected in his temple.'[5]

(2) Do you realize, my fellow beginners, to what delight in the Lord you will come when you cast aside the delight of the world? If you despise the world, you will have a clean heart and you will see Him who made the world. Just as He conquered the world, so will you do likewise by His grace. In fact, you will conquer it and trample upon it again and again if you place your confidence, not in your own strength, but in the help of the most merciful God. Do not despise yourselves, because 'it has not yet appeared what you will be.'[6] Know, however, that when He will appear, you will be like to Him until it will appear what you will be. Know, moreover, that you will see Him, not as He came to us in the fullness of time, but as He, in His unending existence, has made us. Strip yourselves of the old man that you may be clothed with the new.[7] The Lord is entering upon an agreement with you. You have lived for the world; you have given yourselves to flesh and blood; you have borne

5 Ps. 26.3,4.
6 Cf. 1 John 3.2.
7 Cf. Col. 3.9.

the likeness of an earthly man. As, therefore, you have borne the likeness of one who is of the earth, so now, in addition, bear the image of Him who is from heaven. Because the Word was made flesh, my speech is that of a man, namely, that as you presented your bodies to sin as the instrument of iniquity, so now you may present your members to God as instruments of justice.[8] Your Enemy has been armed with your darts against you unto your destruction; against him let your Protector, in turn, be armed with your members unto your salvation. Your Enemy will not harm you if he does not possess your members while you are trying to withdraw. Your Protector will abandon you, and rightly so, if you resist Him in desire and will.

(3) Behold, the kingdom of heaven is set before you for purchase along with the auction and sale of faith! Examine and heap together the resources of your conscience; with one accord, collect the treasures of your heart. Yet, you buy for nothing if you recognize the acceptable grace which is offered to you. You spend nothing; nevertheless, what you acquire is great. Do not be worthless in your own eyes when your Creator and the Creator of all things esteems you so highly that daily He pours out the most precious blood of His only-begotten Son for you. You will not be so worthless if you distinguish what is precious from what is valueless; if you serve, not a creature, but the Creator; if your lower nature has not prevented you from being cleansed from great and deadly sins;[9] if the seed of the word of God, which the heavenly Husbandman is even now scattering in the field of your heart, is not trampled upon by the steps of unworthy needs as though in the road, or if, just when it is budding, it is not crushed by the dullness of your very harsh conscience as though amid rocks, or if it is not choked by the deadly points of your passions as though amid thorns. If you shrink from the sterility of such harmful and accursed land, a fruit-

8 Cf. Rom. 6.19.
9 Cf. Ps. 18.14.

ful and very productive land will certainly receive you, and with great joy you will render a harvest, increased a hundredfold, to Him who planted and watered it; or, if perchance you are not equal to this, you will discharge your interest with sixtyfold fruit; but if you do not meet with this success, even your thirtyfold harvest will not be unacceptable,[10] because all will be received into the celestial granaries and all will be stored away in eternal rest. From the harvest of all the heavenly bread will be made, and every workman who labors without guile in the Lord's vineyard will be satisfied abundantly and profitably, provided that the glory of the mighty One who sowed, watered, moistened, and gave the increase be spread far and wide by the preaching of the Gospel.

(4) Draw near to God, therefore, in contrition of heart, since He is nigh unto all that are of contrite heart and He Himself will save you when you are humble in spirit.[11] Draw near with eager emulation, that you may be enlightened. For you are still in darkness and darkness is in you. But you will be light in the Lord who 'enlightens every man who comes into this world.'[12] Be strengthened before the world; be reformed before God. Now at last be weary of the Babylonian Captivity! Behold, Jerusalem, that heavenly mother, with joyful invitation meets you in the streets and begs you to wish for life and to choose to see good days, such as you have never enjoyed and never will enjoy in this world. For, in the world, your days have failed like the smoke; days on which to be increased was to be lessened, to grow was to fall short, to rise was to disappear. Desire now to live to God, you who have lived for so many evil years in sins, not hurrying in the shadow of death through many years which must be ended in destruction at some time or other, but hurrying in the truth through the good years close to everlasting life where you will be exhausted neither by hunger

10 Cf. Matt. 13.1-23.
11 Cf. Ps. 33.19.
12 Cf. John 1.9.

nor thirst, because faith will be your food and wisdom will be your drink. For now, in the Church, you bless the Lord in faith; then, however, in His presence you will be washed in the abundant waters of the fountain of Israel.

(5) Meanwhile, however, in the course of this journey, let tears be your bread day and night, while people say to you: 'Where is your God?'[13] You cannot show these carnal persons what 'eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man';[14] but until you come and appear before the eyes of your God, do not be disheartened. For He will come; He who freely declared that He was our debtor will come and will fulfill His promises. He who borrowed nothing from anybody deigned to be a debtor on His own promise. We were in debt; we were in debt to just such an extent as we had sinned. He came without debt because He was without sin; He found us oppressed by a deadly and accursed debt, and, paying what He had not stolen, He mercifully freed us from everlasting debt. We had acknowledeged our guilt and we were expecting punishment, but He, having become, not an accomplice in our fault, but a sharer in our punishment, wished to cancel both fault and punishment. For He it is who will snatch 'from usuries and from iniquity' the souls of those who believe and of those who say from their heart in every event: 'I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.'[15] This land ought to be desired, not in an earthly or lifeless but in a heavenly fashion, and with a quickened heart, for it is the land in regard to which the Psalmist, burning with love of it and singing with joy, says in another psalm: 'Thou art my hope, my portion in the land of the living.'[16]

To such a land they are making their way who, in life-

13 Cf. Ps. 41.4.
14 1 Cor. 2.9.
15 Ps. 71.14; 26.13.
16 Ps. 141.6.

giving fashion, put to death their members here upon earth: not those members upon which the structure of this earthly body depends, but those by which the strength of the soul is miserably weakened. Enumerating and designating them quite openly, the Apostle Paul, the vessel of election, says: 'Mortify your members which are on earth: immorality, uncleanness, lust, evil desire, and covetousness (which is a form of idol worship).'[17] Behold what you, who desire to live in that land of the living, ought to put to death in this land of the dying. Therefore, so make yourselves members of Christ that you will not exalt these vices and become members of a harlot. For, what harlot is baser, what harlot is more disgraceful, than that immorality which the Apostle placed first and that covetousness which he placed last? He truthfully called covetousness a form of worship of idols, because, not only in the indulgence of the body, but also in the dissoluteness of the soul, you ought to recognize and avoid it lest you incur that fate of the threatening, chaste spouse and just judge mentioned in the passage: 'Thou hast destroyed everyone who is disloyal to thee.' How much more reasonable, how much more advantageous it is for each one of you to cry out in chastity of heart: 'It is good for me to adhere to my God'?[18] Such adherence is evidenced by that love of which the Apostle says: 'Let love be without pretence. Hate what is evil, hold to what is good.'[19]

(6) Behold where the stadium is; behold where the wrestling grounds are; behold where the racecourse is; behold where the boxing ring is! If you wish to crush a most dangerous opponent with the forces of faith, then destroy your evil ways and embrace good ones. If you wish so to run as to receive the prize, then avoid the unjust and imitate the just. If you wish so to fight that you do not beat the air in vain but so as to strike your opponent manfully, then chastise your

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17 Col. 3.5.
18 Cf. Ps. 72.27,28.
19 Rom. 12.9.

body and bring it into subjection that, abstaining from all things and contending lawfully, you may in triumph share the heavenly prize and the incorruptible crown.[20] What I, invoking the name of your Redeemer, am doing for you, do you complete by a careful examination and by contrition of heart. I resist the wiles of the old Enemy by prayers and complaints to God; do you continue steadfast in your petitions and in the compunction of your heart so that you may be rescued from the power of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of God's brightness. This is now your work; this, your task. I heap well-deserved maledictions on the Devil for his wickedness; do you, rather, by turning away from him and by devoted renunciation, declare a glorious strife against him. He, God's enemy and yours, and most of all his own, must be worn down, bound, and completely removed. As a matter of fact, his rage is manifested shamelessly against God, abominably against you, and most disastrously against himself. Let him breathe forth slaughter everywhere; let him set his snares; let him sharpen his manifold and wily tongues; but do you, calling upon the name of the Saviour, cast out all his poisons from your hearts.

(7) Whatever he [the Devil] instigated by most atrocious suggestions and by most shameful enticements will now be disclosed publicly and removed. Now the domination by which he tyrannized over you will be destroyed. The yoke by which he pressed you down with monstrous cruelty will be lifted from you and placed on his own neck. To accomplish this liberation, merely give your whole-hearted co-operation to your Redeemer. Hope in Him, O full assembly of a new people; and, O you who are now being born [to the faith], whom the Lord has made, strive to be born in sound and healthful fashion, lest you be prematurely and disastrously delivered. Behold the womb of your mother, the Church; behold how she labors in pain to bear you and to bring you forth into the light of faith. Do not, by your impatience,

20 Cf. 1 Cor. 9.24-27.

disturb your mother's body and make narrow the passage of your delivery. O my people who are being created, praise your God; praise your Lord, you who are being made. Praise Him because you are being nursed; praise Him because you are being fed; and, because you are nourished, advance in wisdom and age. These delays of birth in time were also endured by Him who neither failed for lack of time nor advanced because of any length of time, but, rather, excluded time and all its difficulties from His eternal days. Just as a kind nurse admonishes a child, the Apostle says: 'Do not become children in mind, but in malice be children and in mind mature.'[21] As *'competentes'* grow up competently in Christ, so that after the manner of youth you may grow into a perfect man. Make your Father joyful by your increase in wisdom; and do not sadden your Mother by your deficiency.[22]

(8) Love what are you going to be, for you will be sons of God and children of His adoption. This favor will be given to you gratuitously; gratuitously will it be bestowed upon you. You will possess it the more generously and abundantly in proportion as you have been more grateful to Him from whom you have received it. Go to Him who knows those who are His. Then He will not disdain to acknowledge you among those who are His own if, naming the name of the Lord, you depart from iniquity.[23] You have the parents of your flesh, or at least you had in the world those who brought you forth to suffering, to punishment, and to death. But, because each one of you, by reason of a blessed bereavement, can say of such parents: 'My father and my mother have left me,' acknowledge, O Christian, that Father who, when they abandoned you, received you from your mother's womb and to whom one of the faithful says faithfully: 'From my mother's womb thou art my protector.'[24] Your Father

21 1 Cor. 14.20.
22 Cf. Prov. 10.1,15.20.
23 Cf. 2 Tim. 2.19.
24 Ps. 26.10,11.

is God; the Church is your Mother. Far otherwise will you be generated by them than when you were begotten by your physical parents. No labor, no misery, no weeping, no death will attend these parturitions, but only ease, blessing, joy, and life. Generation through human instruments was full of sorrow; through these, it is desirable. They, in giving us life, generated us unto eternal punishment because of the long-standing guilt; these, in regenerating us, bring it about that neither fault nor punishment remain. This is the generation 'of them that seek him, of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob.'[25]

In humility, seek; and when you have found you will come to heights that are free from danger. Innocence will be your infancy; reverence, your childhood; patience, your adolescence; courage, your youth; merit, your manhood; and nothing other than venerable and wise discernment, your old age. Through these divisions or stages of age, you are not developed, but, though remaining the same, you are renewed. For, the second will not push in so that the first may fall; nor will the coming of the third be the death-knell for the second; nor will the fourth be brought into being so that the third may die; nor will the fifth begrudge the fourth its continuance; nor will the sixth bury the fifth. Although all these stages do not come at the same time, they abide together harmoniously in a devout and justified soul. They will bring you to the seventh stage of enduring peace and quiet. Evils will no longer touch you in this seventh stage when you have been freed from the exigencies of destructive age for the sixth time.[26] For evils which will not be in existence will not contend against you; nor will evils prevail which will not dare to contend. There will be secure immortality; there will be immortal security.

(9) Whence [come] all these blessings except from a change of the right hand of the Most High, who will bless

25 Ps. 23.6.
26 Cf. Job 5.19.

your children in you and who will place peace in your borders?[27] Be aroused, therefore, for these joys, you who are both mixed together and separated: mixed with the good and separated from the evil; you who are the elect, the beloved, the foreknown, the called, those who are to be justified, those who are to be glorified, so that, growing, maturing, and becoming old in your faith and in the maturity of your powers, not in the corruption of your members, in a fruitful old age you may serenely tell of the works of the Lord who has done great things for you,[28] who is mighty because His name is great, and of whose wisdom there is no reckoning. You seek life; run to Him who is the fountain of life and, when the darkness of your smoldering passions has been dissipated, you will see light in the light of the Only-begotten, your most gracious Redeemer and your most brilliant Enlightener. If you seek safety, hope in Him 'who savest them who trust in him.'[29] If you seek satiety in drinking and other delights, He will not refuse them. Only come and adore; fall down and weep before Him who made you.[30] He will inebriate you with the plenty of His house, and He will give you to drink of the torrent of His delights.[31]

(10) However, beware lest the foot of pride come to you; and guard lest the hands of sinners move you.[32] Lest the former should happen, pray that God may cleanse you from your secret sins; but, lest the second should rush in and destroy you, beg Him to spare you from the sins of others.[33] If you are lying down, rise up; if you are rising, stand; if you are standing, sit down; if you are sitting, resist. Do not willingly bear the yoke; rather, break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yoke from you,[34] that you may not be held

27 Cf. Ps. 147.13-15.
28 Cf. Luke 1.49.
29 Cf. Ps. 16.7.
30 Cf. Ps. 94.6.
31 Cf. Ps. 35.9.
32 Cf. Ps. 35.12.
33 Cf. Ps. 18.13-15.
34 Cf. Ps. 2.3.

fast again by the bonds of servitude. 'The Lord is near. Have no anxiety.'[35] Now eat the bread of sorrow; the time will come when, after this bread of sadness, He will give you the bread of gladness. However, the worth of the latter depends on the endurance of the former. Your apostasy and flight merited this bread of sorrow; turn back, be sorry, and return to your Lord. He is ready to bestow His bread of joy upon him who returns in penitence, if you are sincere and if, in your misery, you do not defer praying with tears in reparation for your flight. Therefore, in so great masses of troubles, put on sackcloth and humble your soul by fasting. What has been denied to pride is restored to humility. Indeed, when you were examined and when the instigator of your flight and desertion was duly rebuked in the omnipotence of the mighty Trinity, you were not clothed with sackcloth; nevertheless, your feet mystically stood upon it.

(11) The vices and skins of she-goats must be trodden under foot; cloth from perverse kids must be torn asunder. A merciful Father, who did not delay in sacrificing the fatted calf to dispel your consuming hunger, will come out to meet you with the best robe.[36] You will feed upon His flesh; you will drink His blood; and, by the effusion of His blood, your sins are forgiven; your debts are cancelled; your blemishes are removed. Eat as poor people, and then you will be filled so that you may be included among those of whom the Scripture says: 'The poor shall eat and shall be filled.'[37] When thus wholesomely nourished, give forth the glory of His bread. Run to Him and be converted, for He it is who brings back those who have turned away; who searches after the fugitives; who finds those who have been lost; who humbles the proud; who feeds the hungry; who releases those who are in chains; who gives light to the blind; who cleanses the unclean; who refreshes the weary; who raises

35 Phil. 4.6.
36 Cf. Luke 15.11-32.
37 Ps. 21.27.

the dead; and who rescues those who are possessed and held by the spirits of iniquity. Because I am convinced that you are now free from these evil spirits, in joy I admonish you to preserve in your hearts the health which is evident in your bodies.

Sermon 217

On the Prayer of the Lord at the Last Supper[1]

(1) The Lord Christ, who listens to us with His Father, deigned to pray for us to His Father. What is more certain than our happiness, seeing that He prays for us who gives what He Himself prays for! For Christ is Man and God. He prays as Man; as God, He grants what He begs in prayer. What you ought to grasp here is that He attributes everything to the Father, because the Father is not begotten by Him, but He is begotten by the Father. He attributes all to the source whence He was born. Yet He Himself was born as a source, for He is the Fountain of Life. Hence, the Father as a Fountain generated a Fountain. That Fountain, indeed, has generated a Fountain, but the latter is both a generating Fountain and a generated Fountain just as He is a generating God and a generated God, but still only one God. The Father is not the Son; the Son is not the Father; the Holy Spirit of both is not the Father nor the Son; but the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God. Be built up in this unity lest you fall down in separation.

(2) You have heard what our Lord begged for us, what, in very truth, He wished for us. He said: 'Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be there. I wish,' He said, 'that where I am, they also may be with me.'[2] O blessed home! O peaceful country! It has

1 This sermon, evidently delivered shortly before Easter, seems to be non-Augustinian in places.
2 John 17.24.

no enemy; it has no disease. In peace we shall live there; we shall not seek to move away; we shall not find a safer place. Whatever you choose here on earth, you choose with fear, not tranquility, in view. Choose a place for yourself while you are in this evil place, that is in this world, in this life full of temptations, in this mortality full of groans and fears. I repeat, while you are in this evil place, choose a place for yourself to which you may move from this evil place. You will not be able to move to a good place from a bad one unless you have done well in that evil place. What sort of place is that where no one is hungry? Well, then, if you wish to live in that good place where no one is hungry, now in this evil place break your bread with the hungry. In that blessed place no one is a stranger; all live as in their native country. If, then, you wish to live in that good place where no one is a stranger, now in this evil place receive into your house the person who has no home to enter. Give lodging to the stranger in this evil place so that you may come to that good place where you cannot be a stranger. In that good place no one needs clothing; there is no cold, nor is there any heat, so what need is there of a house or of clothing? There will be no house there, but there will be protection. Behold there we find shelter, as the Psalmist says: 'Under the shadow of thy wings will I hope.'[3] Therefore, in this evil place furnish shelter to him who has none so that you may be in that good place where you will have a house of such a sort that you will not need to repair because the rain does not fall there. The perpetual Fountain of Truth is there; but it fertilizes without moistening. It is the rain; it is the Fountain of Life. What else do these passages signify: 'For with thee is the fountain of life,'[4] and 'The Word was with God'?[5]

(3) Therefore, my dearly beloved, do good in this evil

3 Cf. Ps. 56.2.
4 Ps. 35.10.
5 John 1.14.

place so that you may come to the good place concerning which He, who is preparing it for us, says: 'I will that where I am, they also may be with me.'[6] He has gone up to prepare, so that we may come with confidence to what He has prepared. He Himself has made it ready; abide in Him. Is Christ a small abode for you? Do you now fear His Passion? He has risen from the dead; He dies no more; 'death shall no longer have dominion over him.'[7] This place is evil; these days are evil; this world is evil. But let us do well in this evil place, and let us live well in these evil days. The evil place and the evil days pass; a good and everlasting place and good, everlasting days will come; and those good days will make but one day. Now, why are days here evil? Because one day passes, that another may come; today passes, that tomorrow may come; yesterday passed, so that today might come. When nothing passes, there is one day only. Christ is Day and the Father is Day; but the Father is Day derived from no other day, while Christ is Day born of Day. Therefore, in His Passion the Lord Jesus Christ commended to us the sufferings and sorrows of this present life; in His Resurrection He commended the eternal and blessed life of the world to come. Let us bear with the present; let us hope for the future. Hence, at this time we, bruising our souls in fasts and religious devotions, are living the days which signify the suffering of this present world; but, in the days to come, we point out the days of the future world to which we have not yet come. I said: 'We point out,' not 'we hold,' for, as long as the Passion lasts, there is sorrow; after the Resurrection, there is praise.

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6 Cf. John 17.24.
7 Rom. 6.9.

Sermon 218

Concerning the Passion of the Lord, Delivered on the Parasceve[1]

(1) The Passion of Him by whose blood our sins were wiped out is being read solemnly and is being honored with due respect, so that by this yearly devotion our memory may be more readily refreshed, and our faith more brightly illumined by the great gathering of people. Hence, this solemn celebration obliges me to give you a sermon on the Passion of the Lord, such as He Himself gives [in the words of sacred Scripture]. In truth, in these sufferings which He endured from His enemies our Lord has deigned to give us an example of patience, for our ultimate salvation and for practical use in living this life, so that we may refuse to suffer nothing if, according to the authority of the Gospel, He Himself was willing to suffer it. Nevertheless, because in His mortal being He suffered nothing by compulsion, but endured all things by His own will, we rightly believe that He desired to indicate something by each individual event which took place in connection with His Passion and which has been recorded.

(2) In the first place, He gave as a sign of continency the fact that He, having been given up to be crucified, carried His own cross,[2] and, by thus going before us, He showed those desirous of following Him what they ought to do. Furthermore, He expressed this advice in words when He said: 'Let him who loves me take up his cross and follow me.'[3] For, to a certain extent, he takes up his cross who controls his human nature.

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1 This sermon was delivered on the Parasceve. Though the eve of every sabbath was called the parasceve, or day of preparation, this was the eve of the Great Sabbath, that is, the one which fell in the Paschal week.

2 Cf. John 19.17.

3 Cf. Matt. 16.24.

(3) The fact that He was crucified in the place of Calvary[4] showed that in His Passion there is remission of all sins, since the Psalmist says: 'My iniquities are multiplied above the hairs of my head.'[5]

(4) By the fact that two others were crucified with Him, one on either side, He indicated that some would suffer to their advantage and others, to their disadvantage; the former being those of whom it is said: 'Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake';[6] but the latter, those of whom the Apostle says: 'If I deliver my body to be burned, yet do not have charity, it profits me nothing.'[7]

(5) The title placed upon His cross, bearing the inscription, 'The King of the Jews,'[8] indicated that, even by killing Him, they were not able to prevent their having as King Him who would render to them according to their works, with most manifest and evident power. Hence the Psalmist says: 'I am appointed king by him over Sion his holy mountain.'[9]

(6) Because the title was written in three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin,[10] the announcement was made that He would rule not only over the Jews, but also over the Gentiles. Hence, in the same passage in which the Psalmist says: 'I am appointed king by him over Sion his holy mountain,' where, of course, the Hebrew language prevailed, immediately, as if including the Greek and Latin, he adds: 'The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the world for thy possession.'[11] [The title was so written] not because Greek and Latin are the only languages of the Gen-

4 Cf. John 19.17-19.
5 Cf. Ps. 39.13.
6 Matt. 5.10.
7 1 Cor. 13.3.
8 John 19.19.
9 Ps. 2.6.
10 Cf. John 19.20.
11 Ps. 2.6-9.

tiles, but because they are especially outstanding, the Greek because of interest in literature, the Latin, because of the skill of the Romans. Although the complete subjugation to Christ of all the Gentiles was pointed out by the mention of the three languages, nevertheless, the words 'King of the Gentiles' were not written there, but only 'King of the Jews,' so that the source of the seed might be preserved in the correctness of the name. For it was said: 'The law shall come forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.'[12] Now, who are they who in the psalm say: 'He hath subdued the people under us; and the nations under our feet'[13] unless they are the people of whom the Apostle says: 'For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual blessings, they should also minister to them in material things'?[14]

(7) As to the fact that the leaders of the Jews suggested to Pilate not to write specifically that He was the King of the Jews, but that He said He was the King of the Jews,[15] Pilate here represents the wild olive tree to be engrafted in place of the branches which had been broken off.[16] This man was one of the Gentiles, writing the testimony of the Gentiles, concerning those of whom the Lord Himself rightly said: 'The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a people working justice.'[17] Nor yet, on that account, is the Lord not King of the Jews. For, the trunk of the tree bears the engrafted wild olive; not the wild olive, the trunk. And, even though branches were broken off because of infidelity, the Lord did not, for that reason, cast off His people whom He foreknew, since He said: 'I am an Israelite.'[18] And, although the sons of the kingdom who did not wish the Son of God to rule over them go into exterior darkness, nevertheless, 'many will come from the

12 Isa. 2.3.
13 Ps. 46.4.
14 Rom. 15.27.
15 Cf. John 19.21.
16 Cf. Rom. 11.17-25.
17 Cf. Matt. 21.43.
18 Cf. Rom. 11.1-3,17.

east and from the west and will feast,' not with Plato and Cicero, but 'with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.'[19] Pilate definitely wrote 'King of the Jews,' not 'King of the Greeks' or 'King of the Latins,' even though the Lord was destined to rule over the Gentiles. And what Pilate wrote he wrote; he did not change it at the suggestion of the unbelievers,[20] inasmuch as some time previously this prediction concerning him had been made in the psalms: 'Destroy not the inscription of the title.'[21] All the Gentiles believe in the King of the Jews; He rules over all the Gentiles; but still He is King of the Jews. The trunk is strong enough to change the engrafted wild olive into itself, but the wild olive cannot take away the name of the olive tree.

(8) The fact that the soldiers took His garments after they had divided them into four parts[22] signified that His sacraments would penetrate into all four parts of the world.

(9) Because the soldiers cast lots for the tunic which 'was without seam, woven in one piece from the top,'[23] rather than tear it, sufficient indication was given that any persons whatsoever, whether good or bad, may possess the visible signs, even the garments of Christ. However, the absolutely sincere faith, which through love brings about the integrity of unity, does not belong to any persons whatsoever, but, by the grace of God is granted as if by lot, 'because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.'[24] Hence, Peter said to Simon, who had received baptism, but who did not have faith: 'Thou hast no lot nor part in this faith.'[25]

(10) The fact that, on the cross, He recognized His Mother and commended her to His beloved disciple[26] appropriately

19 Matt. 8.11.
20 Cf. John 19.22.
21 Cf. Ps. 56.1; 57.1.
22 Cf. John 19.23.
23 *Ibid.*
24 Rom. 5.5.
25 Cf. Acts 8.21.
26 Cf. John 19.26-28.

shows His human affection at the moment when He was dying as Man. For, His hour had not yet come when He, about to change water into wine, said to that same Mother: 'What wouldst thou have me to do, woman? My hour has not yet come.'[27] For, He had not drawn from Mary what was divine in Him, but He had taken from Mary what hung upon the cross.

(11) Because He sought faith from His own, He said: 'I thirst,' but, because 'He came unto his own and his own received him not,'[28] instead of the sweetness of faith, they gave Him the bitterness of perfidy, and that on a sponge. Truly are they to be compared to a sponge, since they are not solid but inflated; not open with a direct approach of acknowledgment, but full of empty places with winding passages of trickery. To be sure, that drink had hyssop also, a lowly herb of a very strong root which is said to cling to the rock.[29] For, you see, there were in that crowd people by whom this crime was afterwards kept in mind for the purpose of humbling their souls by penitence and abjection. He who accepted the hyssop with the vinegar knew these persons. As a matter of fact, when hanging on the cross, He prayed for them, as another Evangelist testifies: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'[30]

(12) Then 'he said: "It is consummated!" And bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.'[31] Thus, waiting until all the prophecies which had been made concerning Him should be fulfilled, He made evident, not the compulsion of His death, but His power, because this had been written: 'And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.'[32] [He acted] as One having the power to lay down His life, as indeed He Himself had testified.[33] He gave up His spirit in humility,

27 Cf. John 2.4.
28 John 19.28; 1.11.
29 Cf. John 19.28-30.
30 Luke 23.34.
31 John 19.30.
32 Ps. 68.22.
33 Cf. John 10.18.

that is, with bowed head; with uplifted head He would receive it again in the Resurrection. Jacob the Patriarch, in his blessing of Juda, predicted that this death and bending of the head were of great efficacy in the words: 'You have gone up; crouching, you have couched as a lion,'[34] signifying His death by the going up and His power by the lion.

(13) Now, in truth, the Gospel itself has given an explanation as to why it happened that the legs of the other two were broken, but His were not, because He was dead. For, it was fitting that by this sign He should show that the Pasch of the Jews was commended in an express prophecy about Him where the command was given that they should not break the bones of the sheep.[35]

(14) As for the blood and water which His side, pierced with the lance, poured forth upon the earth, without a doubt they represent the sacraments by which the Church was formed, as Eve was formed from the side of the sleeping Adam who was the form of the future.

(15) Joseph and Nicodemus buried Him.[36] As some have interpreted these names, Joseph signifies 'the exalted'; and because Nicodemus is a Greek name, many think it is derived from 'victory' and from 'people' since *nîkos* means victory and *dēmos,* people. Who, then, has been exalted by dying except the One who said: 'Unless the grain of wheat . . . dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it is multiplied'?[37] And who, even by dying, conquered a persecuting people, unless it be He who will judge them at the resurrection?

34 Cf. Gen. 49.9.
35 Cf. Exod. 12.46.
36 Cf. John 19.31-42.
37 Cf. John 12.24-26.

FOR THE VIGIL OF EASTER

Sermon 219

THE BLESSED APOSTLE Paul, when exhorting us to imitate him, mentions, among many other manifestations of his virtue, 'many sleepless nights.'[1] How much more readily, then, ought we to watch on this night, the mother, as it were, of all holy vigils, on which the whole world keeps watch! Not that world of which it was written: 'If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; which is not from the Father.'[2] Indeed, the Devil and his angels rule such a world, that is, the children of unbelief, against whom the same Apostle warns us that we have to struggle in the words: 'Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the Principalities and the Powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness.'[3] We, too, at one time were darkness, but now we are light in the Lord. And so, in the light of the vigil, let us resist the world-rulers of this darkness. No, that world does not watch on this feast, but the watch is kept by that

1 Cf. 2 Cor. 11.27.
2 1 John 2.15-17.
3 Eph. 6.12.

world concerning which the Apostle says: 'For God was truly in Christ, reconciling the world to himself by not reckoning against men their sins.'[4]

Nevertheless, let the celebration of this vigil be so glorious throughout the whole world as to compel even those to watch at least physically who, I do not say, sleep in heart, but who are actually buried in hellish wickedness. Even they watch on the night when what was promised so long in advance is manifestly fulfilled: 'And night shall be light as the day.'[5] This is accomplished in the hearts of the devout to whom St. Paul says: 'For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.'[6] This happens also in those who are emulous, both those who see in the Lord and those who are prejudiced against the Lord. Hence, on this night both a hostile world and a reconciled world watch. The one keeps watch so that, having been freed, it may praise the Healer; the other, that, having been condemned, it may blaspheme the Judge. The one watches, glowing bright with pious thoughts; the other, gnashing the teeth and wasting away through envy. In a word, love prevents the one from sleeping during this celebration while iniquity prevents the other; Christian vigor, the one and diabolic spite, the other.

Therefore, even by our enemies we are unintentionally warned as to how we ought to keep watch for our own interests since, on account of us, they who envy us are keeping watch. Indeed, on this vigil, many of those who are marked in no way by the name of Christ do not sleep because of pain; many, too, because of shame; and some, even, who are close to the faith, through fear of God. For various reasons this celebration rouses them. How, then, should the friend of Christ watch in joy when the enemy watches in pain? How should the Christian burn to keep watch in view of such great glory of Christ when the pagan is ashamed to

4 2 Cor. 5.19.
5 Ps. 138.12.
6 Eph. 5.8.

sleep? How fitting it is for him to keep watch who has already entered this great house [of the Lord] when he is keeping watch who is arranging to enter it? Let us watch and pray, therefore, so that we may celebrate this vigil both externally and internally. May God speak to us in His lessons; may we speak to God in our prayers. If we in obedience hearken to His words, He whom we petition dwells among us.

Sermon 220

We know, my brethren, and we hold to it in very firm faith, that Christ died once for us: the Just for sinners, the Master for slaves, the Free for captives, the Physician for the sick, the Happy One for the wretched, the Rich One for the needy, the Seeker for the lost, the Redeemer for the sold, the Shepherd for the sheep, and, what is more wonderful than all, the Creator for the creature; preserving what He had always been, giving up what He became; hiding as God, appearing as Man; giving life by His power, but dying because of His infirmity; unchangeable in divinity, yet susceptible to pain in the flesh. As the Apostle says: 'He was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification.'[1] You know very well that all this happened once. Yet, with the passage of time, the solemnity is renewed as if that were happening again which truth, in so many places in Scripture, declares has happened only once. Nevertheless, truth and the solemnity are not at variance, so that one lies while the other tells the truth. As a matter of fact, what truth declares has actually happened only once, this the solemnity renews as worthy of being celebrated often by pious hearts. Truth reveals what has happened as it actually took place; the solemnity, however, not by re-enacting events, but by dwelling upon them, does not permit the past to pass away.

1 Cf. Rom. 4.25.

In a word, 'Christ, our passover, has been sacrificed.'[2] As He died once who 'dies now no more, death shall no longer have dominion over him.'[3] Therefore, according to this voice of truth, we say that our Pasch has been sacrificed once and that He will not die again; nevertheless, according to the voice of the feast we say that the Pasch will return each year. Thus I think we interpret what is written in the psalm: 'The thought of man shall give praise to thee; and the remainders of the thought shall keep holiday to thee.'[4] For, if the thoughts did not entrust to the memory what is said about things accomplished in time, it would afterwards find no remainders of the thought. On that account, the thought of man, when gazing upon truth, gives praise to God; but the traces of the thought, which remain in the memory, do not cease to solemnize the feast at the recognized times, lest the thought should be judged ungrateful. To this reasoning we owe the glorious celebration of this night, when by our vigil we honor, through the remainders of thought, the Resurrection of the Lord, which by our actual thought we truthfully acknowledge has taken place only once. Therefore, may God forbid that the neglect of this solemnity should make irreligious those whom the preaching of the truth has made learned! This celebration has made this night outstanding throughout the whole world. It shows the ranks of the Christians; it confounds the darkness of the Jews; it overturns the idols of the pagans.

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2 1 Cor. 5.7.
3 Rom. 6.9.
4 Ps. 75.11.

Sermon 221[1]

(1) Since our Lord Jesus Christ made one day dolorous by His death and another glorious by His Resurrection, let us, by recalling both days in solemn commemoration, keep vigil in memory of His death and rejoice in celebration of His Resurrection. This is our yearly feast; it is our Passover, not symbolized by the slaying of an animal as in the case of the ancient people, but fulfilled by the Victim of salvation as to a new people, because 'Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed,' and 'the former things have passed away; behold, they are made new!'[2] For we do not mourn unless weighed down by our sins, nor do we rejoice unless justified by His grace, inasmuch as He 'was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification.'[3] In our grief over His death and our joy at His Resurrection, we are happy; and because, on account of us and for our sake, sorrow was endured and joy anticipated, we do not proceed in ungrateful forgetfulness but we celebrate in grateful memory.

Let us keep vigil, therefore, my dearly beloved, because the entombment of Christ was protracted to this night so that on this particular night the resurrection of His body might take place, of that body once mocked on the cross but now adored in heaven and on earth. This night, of course, is understood as belonging to the coming day which we call the Lord's day. Furthermore, it was fitting for Him to rise again during the night because by His Resurrection He has illumined our darkness. Not without significance, then, did we sing to Him a little while ago: 'Thou shalt enkindle my lamp, O Lord, my God; thou shalt enlighten my darkness.'[4]

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1 This sermon, of which only a fragment appears in Migne's *Patrologia*, was discovered and published by Dom Morin in 1917; cf. Wilmart, *op. cit.* 117. The text used here is that of Lambot, *op. cit.* 77-80. As first-hand information on the early celebration of the Easter vigil this sermon is of special importance today.

2 1 Cor. 5.7; 2 Cor. 5.17.

3 Rom. 4.25.

4 Cf. Ps. 17.29.

In like manner, our own devotion commends this great mystery so that, as our faith strengthened by His Resurrection now keeps vigil, so, too, this night illuminated by our vigil shines resplendent and so that we are able worthily to take thought with the whole Church diffused throughout the world lest we be found in darkness. From so many and such great nations which this very solemn celebration has gathered together everywhere in the name of Christ, the sun has withdrawn but the day has not departed, since a brightly lighted earth has succeeded to a brightly lighted heaven.

(2) Furthermore, if anyone should inquire as to the reasons for this great vigil, we can both find them without difficulty and express them with confidence. As a matter of fact, He who has bestowed upon us the glory of His name has Himself illuminated this night. He to whom we say: 'Thou shalt enlighten my darkness' furnishes light for our hearts, so that, just as we joyfully perceive this splendor of lights with our bodily eyes, with an enlightened mind we see the reason for this glorious night. What, then, is the reason Christians keep vigil today on this festive anniversary? In truth, we are now observing a special vigil, the one to which we are accustomed to refer when, with intense desire, we ask and say: 'When are we going to keep the vigil?' We keep watch in preparation for many days; nevertheless, in comparison with this one other vigils are not to be considered. The Apostle, indeed, commended to the Church assiduity in fasting as well as in keeping vigils, saying of himself: 'in fastings more often [than others], in vigils more often.'[5] Yet, the vigil of this night is so important that it appropriates as its own even the name which it shares in common with the other vigils. Therefore, after first saying a few words about vigils in general, I shall discuss the special vigil of this day which the Lord has given to us.

(3) In that life for the attainment of the peace of which we labor, and which Truth promises to us in the resurrection

5 Cf. 2 Cor. 11.27.

after the death of this body or at the end of this world, we shall never sleep, just as we shall never die. For what else is sleep but a daily death which does not completely remove man hence nor detain him too long? And what else is death but a very long and very deep sleep from which God arouses man? Therefore, where there is no death, there is likewise no sleep, the image of death. Finally, there is no sleep except that of mortals. Rest does not belong to the angels because they are always alive and never refresh their health by sleep. Just as there is life there [in heaven], so there is watchfulness without end; neither does living signify anything other than keeping watch; nor does keeping watch signify anything other than living. But, since we do not live in this body 'which is corruptible and a load upon the soul,'[6] unless we repair our strength by sleep, we interrupt our life by a likeness of death so that, in the intervals at least, we may be able to live. And, in this way, each one keeps watch chastely, innocently, and assiduously, meditating undoubtedly on the life of the angels—for, in so far as the weakness of the body is an earthly burden, heavenly desires are frustrated—and striving against this death-bringing mass by longer vigil so that he may gain merit for eternal life. For he who desires to live forever and who does not love to keep watch generously is not consistent. He wishes that there be no death and yet he does not wish to lessen its image. This is the reason, this is the explanation, why the Christian must rather frequently exercise his mind in keeping vigil.

(4) Now, my brethren, while I mention a few other points, consider the special vigil of this night. I have told you why we ought to curtail our sleep and increase our vigils rather often; now I must discuss why we keep watch with such great solemnity on this particular night. No Christian doubts that the Lord Christ rose again from the dead on the third day. Moreover, the holy Gospel attests that the Resurrection took place on this night. Furthermore, there is no doubt that

6 Cf. Wisd. 9.15.

the day is computed from the preceding night, and not according to the order of days which is mentioned in Genesis,[7] although there, too, darkness took precedence, for 'darkness covered the abyss,' when 'God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.' But, because that darkness was not yet night, for not yet had day come into being, 'God separated the light from the darkness,' first calling the light Day, and then calling the darkness Night. Thus, the period from the creation of light to another morning was reckoned as one day. It is clear that those days began at dawn and ended, at the expiration of night, with the dawn of the next morning. But, after created man turned from the light of justice to the darkness of sin from which the grace of Christ frees him, it came about that we now compute our days from nights, because we are attempting to come, not from light to darkness, but from darkness to light and, with the help of God, we hope that this will happen. As the Apostle says: 'The night is far advanced; the day is near at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light.'[8]

Hence, the day of the Passion of the Lord on which He was crucified followed its own night, already past, and on that account it was closed and terminated at the Parasceve which the Jews also call the 'unblemished supper,' at the beginning of which night they entered upon the observance of the sabbath. Then the sabbath, commencing with its own night, ends with the evening of the next night which, in turn, belongs to the beginning of the Lord's Day, since the Lord consecrated it by the glory of His Resurrection. And so we are now celebrating by this solemnity the memory of that night which belongs to the beginning of the Lord's Day. By keeping vigil we pass that night on which the Lord rose and, for us, entered upon that life concerning which I spoke not long ago, where there is no death nor sleep. He did this with

7 Gen. 1.2-4.
8 Rom. 13.12.

His own body, which He 'raised up from the dead,' so that He 'dies no more, death shall no longer have dominion over him.'[9] For, when those who sought Him lovingly came to His tomb at daybreak, they did not find His body and they received from the angels the answer that He had already risen. It is clear, then, that He rose during the night at the end of which that daybreak came. Therefore, He to whom, rising from the dead, we sing a little longer than usual in our vigil will grant us to reign with Him in eternal life. But if, by chance, His body was still in the tomb and He had not yet risen at these hours when we prolong this vigil, even so it is not incongruous to keep the watch, because He who died that we might live slept that we might watch.

Sermon 222

Although this night's solemn service of itself urges you to watch and pray, my dearly beloved, you are also entitled to a sermon from me so that the voice of the shepherd may rouse the flock of the Lord against envious hostile powers and rulers of darkness, as against beasts of the night. For, as the Apostle says: 'Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood,' that is, against men who are weak in mortal frame, 'but against the Principalities and the Powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness on high.'[1] And yet, on that account, you should not think that the Devil and his angels to whom the Apostle refers in these words are the rulers of that world concerning which St. John wrote: 'The world was made through Him.'[2] For, when the Apostle has said that they were rulers of the world, lest anyone should understand it as the world men-

9 Acts 3.15; Rom. 6.9.

1 Eph. 6.12.
2 John 1.10.

tioned in several passages of the Scriptures under the name of heaven and earth, he added immediately by way of explanation: 'of this darkness,' that is, of unbelievers. On that account, he says to those who now believe: 'For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.'[3]

There are, then, spiritual forces of wickedness on high, not where the stars glimmer in orderly array and the holy angels abide, but in the murky abode of the lowest region of the air, where the mist is collected, in spite of the fact that it is written: 'Who covereth the heaven with clouds,' where birds, too, fly about in spite of the fact that they are called: 'fowls of the air.'[4] In such high places, then, and not in the loftier tranquillity of the heavens, those very wicked spirits dwell against whom we publicly declare a spiritual warfare, so that, when these bad angels have been overcome, we may enjoy that reward by which we will be associated with the good angels in unchanging eternity. Wherefore, in another passage, when the same Apostle was referring to the gloomy kingdom of the Devil, he said: 'According to the fashion of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air about us, the prince of the spirit which now works on the unbelievers.'[5] They are rulers of the world, then, in regard to that which is the spirit of this world. And, just as in the one case he explained what he meant by the 'world' by adding 'unbelievers,' so, in the passage quoted above, he added 'of this darkness.' Furthermore, just as he says here 'the prince of the power of the air about us,' so, above, he says 'on high.' Consequently, thanks be to the Lord our God, who 'has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son.'[6]

Therefore, since you have been separated from that dark-

3 Eph. 5.8.
4 Ps. 146.8; 49.11.
5 Eph. 2.2.
6 Col. 1.12-14.

ness by the light of the Gospel and redeemed from those powers by the precious blood, 'watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.'[7] For, if you have 'faith which works through charity,'[8] the prince of the world has been cast out of your hearts,[9] but outside, 'as a roaring lion, [he] goes about seeking someone to devour.'[10] Do not, then, give place to the Devil, no matter where he tries to penetrate; rather, let the Lord dwell within you to oppose him whom He cast out by His sufferings. When the Devil had power over you, 'you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk, then, as children of light.'[11] Keep vigil against the darkness and its rulers in your mother, the light; and from the bosom of your mother, the light, pray to the Father of lights.

Sermon 223

In the book which is called Genesis, Scripture says: 'And God saw that the light was good. God separated the light from the darkness, calling the light Day and the darkness Night.'[1] If, then, the Lord called the light Day, undoubtedly those to whom the Apostle said: 'For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord,'[2] were the day, since He 'who commanded light to shine out of darkness, has shone'[3] in their hearts. Those infants[4] whom you see externally clad in white robes and cleansed internally, who by the gleaming whiteness of their garments indicate the

7 Matt. 26.41.
8 Gal. 5.6.
9 Cf. John 12.31.
10 1 Peter 5.8.
11 Eph. 5.8.

1 Gen. 1.4-6.
2 Eph. 5.8.
3 2 Cor. 4.6.
4 The newly baptized, though advanced in years, were called *infantes*.

brightness of their souls, were darkness when they were overwhelmed by the night of their sins. But now, because they have been cleansed in the bath of mercy, watered by the fountain of wisdom, and drenched with the light of justice: 'This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad and rejoice therein.'[5] Let the day of the Lord hear us; let the day made by the Lord hear us; let it hear and hearken, so that we may rejoice and be glad in Him, since this is our joy and our crown if you, as the Apostle says: 'stand fast in the Lord.'[6] Hear us, therefore, O new-born sons of a chaste mother; yes, hear us, O sons of a Virgin Mother. Since 'you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk then, as children of light,'[7] and cleave to the children of light. To speak more precisely, cling to the faithful who are good, for there are believers who are evil—a deplorable situation. There are those who, though called believers, are not so. There are believers in whom the sacraments of Christ are subjected to abuse; persons who live in such a way that they themselves perish, and they ruin others. They themselves perish by evil living; they destroy others, however, by giving the example of evil living. Do not wish, my dearly beloved, to be associated with such as these. Seek the good; cleave to the good; be good.

Do not be surprised at the large number of bad Christians who fill the church, who communicate at the altar, who, with much ado, praise the bishop or priest when he discourses on good morals. In the case of such people the prediction made by my fellow shepherd in the psalm is fulfilled: 'I have declared and I have spoken; they are multiplied above number.'[8] They can exist along with us in the Church of this time, but they will not be able to remain in that assembly of saints which will be after the resurrection. For the Church of this

5 Ps. 117.24.
6 Cf. Phil. 4.1.
7 Eph. 5.8.
8 Ps. 39.6.

time, since it has good mixed with bad, is compared to a threshing floor where grain is mixed with chaff; but, after the judgment, it will have all good members without the evil. This threshing floor contains the harvest sown by the Apostles, watered by subsequent good teachers down to the present time, somewhat bruised by the persecution of enemies, but with the remnant not yet purged by the final sifting. Nevertheless, He will come concerning whom you recited in the Creed: 'Thence He will come to judge the living and the dead,' and, as the Gospel says: 'His winnowing fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clean out his threshing floor, and will gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.'[9]

Let the old faithful members hear what I say; let him who is the grain rejoice in the tossing; let him remain; let him not depart from the threshing floor. Let him not, following his own judgment, try to free himself from the chaff, since he will not be able to remain on the threshing floor if he wishes to separate himself now from the chaff. Furthermore, when He comes who distinguishes without error, He will not raise to the granary what He has not found on the threshing floor. Whatever grains have now withdrawn from the threshing floor will then boast in vain about their stock. The barn will be filled and closed. Fire will consume whatever has remained outside. Therefore, my dear brethren, let him who is good put up with the evil; let him who is bad imitate the good. On this threshing floor, in truth, grain can degenerate into chaff; and, on the other hand, grain can be restored from chaff. These changes take place daily, my brethren. This life is full of punishments and consolations. Daily those, who seemed good, do wrong and perish; and again, those, who seemed evil, are converted and live. For, 'God does not will the death of the sinner, but only that he be converted from his ways and live.'[10]

9 Matt. 3.12.
10 Cf. Ezech. 18.23.

Hear me, O grains of wheat; hear me, you who conform to my desires; hear me, O grain. Do not be saddened by the intermixture of chaff; the evil will not be with you forever. To how great an extent does the chaff press upon you? Thank God that it is not heavy. Only let us remain the wheat; then, how abundant soever the chaff may be, it will not oppress us. For God is faithful and will not permit us to be tempted beyond our strength, but with the temptation will also give us a way out that we may be able to bear it.[11] Let the chaff also hear us; let them listen, wheresoever they may be. I do not wish them to be here; nevertheless, in case they are here, let us exhort them. Therefore, hear me, O chaff; yet, if you are listening, you will be chaff no longer. Listen, then. May the patience of God benefit you; may close association with the grain, and may this admonition make you grain also. You do not lack the showers of the words of God; let not the field of God in you be arid. Therefore, be revived, become grain, grow to full sheaves, for He who sowed you wishes to find ears, not thorns.

11 Cf. 1 Cor. 10.13.

FOR EASTER SUNDAY

Sermon 224

On this day I address those who have been baptized, reborn in Christ Jesus, and you, my brethren, in them, and they in you. Behold, you have become members of Christ. If you consider what you have become, all your bones will cry out: 'Lord, who is like to thee?'[1] For that condescension of God, namely, that grace has come gratuitously to you without any antecedent merits on your part, cannot be adequately pondered; all human utterance and feelings fail us. Because it is given gratis, for that very reason it is called grace. What grace? That you should be members of Christ, sons of God; that you should be brothers of the Only-begotten. If He is the Only-begotten, how are you His brothers unless, while He is the Only-begotten by nature, you have become His brothers by grace? Therefore, because you have become members of Christ, I warn you; I fear for you, not so much from the pagans, nor so much from the Jews, nor so much from the heretics, as from the bad Catholics. Choose for yourselves those whom you may imitate among the people of God. For, if you wish to imitate the crowd, you will not tread the narrow path in the company of the few. Abstain from fornication, robbery, fraud,

1 Ps. 34.10.

perjury, from illicit conduct, and from quarrels; keep drunkenness at a distance from you; fear adultery as you fear death, not that death which releases the soul from the body, but that in which the soul will burn forever.

(2) My brethren, my sons, my daughters, my sisters, I know that the Devil is playing his part and that he does not cease to speak in the hearts of those whom he holds bound by his fetters. I know that to fornicators, to adulterers who are not content with their own wives, he says in their hearts: 'Sins of the flesh are not grievous.' In opposition to this diabolical whispering we ought to emphasize the Incarnation of Christ. The reason why the Enemy deceives Christians by the allurements of the flesh is that he makes trivial what is weighty, gentle what is harsh, sweet what is bitter. But, of what use is it for Satan to make light of what Christ shows is serious? Does the Devil accomplish anything new when he says to faithful Christians: 'Nothing that you are doing is serious'? You sin in the flesh; is that not in the spirit, also? Is the sin of the flesh easily wiped out; is pardon easily granted by God? What great thing does the Devil accomplish? He resorts to the same trick which he used in paradise[2] when he said: 'Eat, and you shall be as gods; you shall not die.' God had said: 'For the day you eat of it, you must die.' The Enemy came, saying: 'No, you shall not die, but your eyes will be opened; and you will be as gods.' The command of God was set aside, and the argument of the Devil accepted. Then came the realization that God's command was true and the Devil's deception false. Was it of any help, I ask you, for the woman to say: 'The serpent deceived me'? Did her excuse help any? If it did, then why did condemnation follow?

(3) Therefore, I say to you, my brethren, my sons, to you who have wives, do not admit any other interest; to you who do not have wives and who wish to marry, keep yourselves inviolate for your wives as you desire to find them

2 Cf.Gen. 3.4; 2.17; 3.4-6,13-24.

inviolate. You who have vowed chastity to God, do not look back. Behold, I say this to you; I cry out to you; I exonerate myself, for God has placed me here as a minister, not as an overseer. Nevertheless, wherever I can, wherever I am given the opportunity, wherever I am permitted, wherever I know circumstances, I chide; I rebuke; I anathematize; I excommunicate; yet I do not correct. Why? Because 'neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the growth.'[3] Now, since I am speaking, since I am admonishing you, what else is needed except that God hear me on your behalf and that He accomplish something in you, that is, in your hearts. I speak briefly; to you I commend the faithful, yet I alarm them; I am trying to build you up [in the Lord]. You are members of Christ; hear, not me, but the Apostle when he says: 'Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot?'[4] But someone or other says to me: 'She whom I have is not a harlot; she is my concubine. Holy bishop, you have made my concubine a harlot!' Did I say that? The Apostle makes the complaint and I have brought a false charge upon myself! I wish you to be sound in mind; why do you rave at me as if you were insane? Do you, who say this, have a wife? You answer: 'Yes.' Well, then, as I said, whether you wish it or not, any woman other than your wife who cohabits with you is a harlot. There, go, tell her that the bishop has insulted you. You have your lawful wife, and another cohabits with you; whoever she is, as I said before, she is a harlot. On the contrary, your wife is faithful to you; she knows no one except you alone and she does not contemplate knowing another. Therefore, since she is chaste, why do you commit fornication? If she loves you alone, why do you love two women? But you say: 'My servant is my concubine. I do not go to somebody else's wife, do I? I do not go to a public harlot, do I? Am I not permitted to do what I wish

3 1 Cor. 3.7.
4 1 Cor. 6.15.

in my own house?' I answer: 'You are not so permitted. They who act thus go to hell and will burn in everlasting fire.'

(4) Let me be permitted to speak thus and to make these statements even here. Let those who are of the sort described above correct their ways while they are living, lest they should wish to do so later and not be able, because death comes suddenly, and then there is question, not of being corrected, but of being cast into fire. You do not know when that last hour is going to come and yet you say: 'I am reforming.' When are you going to reform? When are you going to change? 'Tomorrow,' you say. Behold, how often you say: 'Tomorrow, tomorrow.' You have really become a crow![5] Behold, I say to you that when you make the noise of a crow, ruin is threatening you. For that crow whose cawing you imitate went forth from the Ark and did not return. Instead, my brother, return to the Church, which the Ark then represented. O you who are newly baptized, hear me; you who have been reborn through the blood of Christ, hear me. I beg you by the name which has been invoked upon you, by the altar to which you have approached, by the sacraments which you have received, by the future judgment of the living and the dead, I beg you, I put you under obligation in the name of Christ, not to imitate those persons who you know are such as I described. On the contrary, may the sacrament of Him who did not wish to come down from the cross, but who did wish to rise from the tomb, endure.

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5 Cf. Gen. 8.7. The words 'tomorrow, tomorrow' would in the Latin form, '*cras, cras,*' approximate the cawing of a crow.

Sermon 225[1]

(1) The Son of God, born of the Father without the limits of time, entrusts to us the depth of divine grace which has been poured forth on us. For what was He before He was made Man? Suppose that you have wondered about that problem, and that you have asked that question. As a matter of fact, my brethren, we are considering whether or not Christ existed before He was born of the Virgin Mary. Realize, of course, that we are investigating that about which we are not permitted to doubt. For, to such thoughts the Lord Himself made answer when He was asked: 'Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?' He replied: 'Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I am.'[2] Therefore, He existed, but He was not yet Man. Lest, by chance, someone might say: 'He was an angel,' the holy Gospel has declared to you that He was Christ. And do you seek what He was? 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.'[3] Consider what He was. 'In the beginning was the Word.' The Word was not made in the beginning, but it existed; it was. Moreover, hear what the Scripture says about the world: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'[4] Do you ask through what means God made the world? 'In the beginning was the Word,' and, through the Word, heaven and earth were made. The Word was not made, but was. Now it remains to see what was the nature of the Word, because our words, too, are expressed. Our words, indeed, are conceived by thought;

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1 In the Louvain Codex, this sermon is entitled *De nativitate* and in the Vatican manuscript, *De Trinitate*. The fourth section, however, gives evidence that it was delivered on Easter Sunday, when it was customary to read the beginning of St. John's Gospel to the newly baptized to give them an appreciation of the depth of divine grace by which the Son of God made Man had made the regenerated sons of men the sons of God.

2 John 8.57,58.

3 John 1.1.

4 Gen. 1.1.

are brought forth by the voice; nevertheless, when thought out and brought forth, they pass away. But what about that other passage: 'The Word was with God'? [You say:] 'Tell where He was, tell what He was.' I have already done so. The holy Gospel has said to you: 'In the beginning was the Word.' [You repeat:] 'Tell where He was; tell what He was.' 'And the Word was with God.' 'But I asked what was the nature of the Word,' [you continue]. Do you wish to hear what He was? 'And the Word was God.' O Word! what sort of Word art thou? Who shall explain the word: 'And the Word was God'? Perhaps He was made by God? Far be such a thought! Hear what the holy Gospel says: "All things were made through him.'[5] What does the 'all' mean? Whatever was made by God was made through the Word. And how was He Himself made who made all things? Did He make Himself? Finally, if He made Himself, then He who made Himself previously existed. If, therefore, He who made Himself previously existed, then He always existed.

(2) How was such a Word in the Virgin? 'All things were made through him.' What does 'all' mean? Whatever was made by God was made through the Word. My brother, do not separate the Holy Spirit from so great a work. From what great work? The angels are not an insignificant, but a great work; yet the angels adore the humanity of Christ as He sits at the right hand of the Father. Such a work, then, the Holy Spirit in particular accomplished. In that work He was mentioned by name when the angel announced to the holy Virgin that she would bear a Son. Because she had vowed virginity, and because her husband was, not the destroyer, but the guardian, of her chastity—no, not the guardian, either, for God was the guardian, but her husband was the witness of her virginal chastity, lest she should be considered an adulteress—when the angel made this announcement to her, she said: 'How shall this happen, since I do not know man?' If she were planning to know man, she

5 John 1.3.

would not wonder. That wonderment is witness of her vow. 'How shall this happen, since I do not know man? How shall this happen?' And the angel said to her: 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, (and behold how that which you question shall be done) and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God.'[6] Well did he say: 'It shall overshadow thee,' lest virginity should feel the heat of passion. And when she was pregnant, the Gospel says of her: 'Mary was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.'[7] Therefore, the Holy Spirit wrought the flesh of Christ; and the only-begotten Son of God wrought His own flesh. How do we prove this? Because Scripture says: 'Wisdom hath built herself a house.'[8]

Now, then, consider this question: How is so great a God, God with God, the Word of God through whom all things were made, how is He shut up in a womb? In the first place, did the Word leave heaven in order to be there? In order to be in the Virgin's womb, did the Word leave heaven? And how would the angels live, if the Word should leave heaven? Yet, in order that man might eat the Bread of angels, the Lord of the angels became Man. Let human consideration wander through its mists, let it get lost, let it seek, and let it find out how the Word of God, through whom all things were made, did not leave the angels, did not leave His Father when He was in the Virgin's womb. How could He be shut up in that womb? He could exist; He could not be enclosed. 'How,' the seeker asks, 'could such greatness exist in so small a place?' That womb, therefore, received what the world does not contain. He was not made smaller so that He might be in the womb. He was in the womb and He was great. How great was He? Tell us how great He was; tell us what He was.

(3) Tell us what He was. 'And the Word was God.' And

6 Luke 1.34,35.
7 Matt. 1.18.
8 Prov. 9.1.

I say that I who speak to you know this, yet I do not understand it; but thought causes us to be extended, extension enlarges us, and this enlargement makes us capacious. Even when we have become capacious, however, we will not be able to understand completely. Nevertheless, I am going to talk the matter over with you in my own words. Behold what I am saying, what I am going to say; hear this; understand this word of mine, for this is a human word. If you are not able to understand this word, see how far you are from understanding that Word. Certainly we wonder how Christ took flesh, how He was born of a virgin, yet did not depart from the Father. Behold, before I, who now speak with you, came to you, I gave thought in advance to what I was going to say to you. When I thought over what I was going to say to you, the word was already in my mind, for I would not say it to you unless I had thought it out beforehand. I found you a Latin; the word, then, had to be expressed in Latin. If you had been a Greek, I would have been obliged to speak to you in Greek and to compose a speech in Greek for you. Now, that word in my mind is neither Latin nor Greek; what is in my mind certainly precedes those two languages. I seek a sound for it; I seek, as it were, a vehicle; I seek some means by which it may come to you without departing from me. Behold, you have heard what is in my mind; now it is in yours; you have begun to possess it and I have not lost it. Just as my word assumed sound, through which it might be heard, so the Word assumed flesh, through which It might be seen. I have explained this problem to the best of my ability. Yet, what have I said? And who am I who have spoken? I, an ordinary human being, have wished to speak about God. He is so great; He is such that we cannot speak about Him, yet we ought not to be silent about Him.

(4) I give thanks to Thee, O Lord, because Thou knowest what I say and even what I have desired to say. I have fed my fellow servants with the crumbs from Thy table; do Thou

feed and nourish interiorly those whom Thou hast regenerated. Behold, what was that group? 'Darkness, but now . . . light in the Lord.' For in such words the Apostle says: 'For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.'[9] O you who have been baptized, you 'were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.' If light, then day; for God 'called the light Day.'[10] You were darkness; He made you light; He made you the day; concerning you we now sing: 'This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad and rejoice therein.'[11] Avoid darkness. Drunkenness leads to darkness. Do not depart sober and return intoxicated. We shall see you this afternoon. The Holy Spirit has begun to dwell [in you]; let Him not move out; do not shut Him out of your hearts. He, a good guest, found you empty; He is filling you. He found you hungry; He is feeding you. Finally, He found you thirsty; He is giving you to drink. Let Him inebriate you, for the Apostle says: 'Do not be drunk with wine, for in that is debauchery.' And, as if wishing to teach us how we ought to be inebriated, he adds: 'But be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing to one another in hymns and psalms and spiritual songs, singing in your hearts to the Lord.'[12] Is not he who rejoices in the Lord and who sings praises to the Lord with great exultation like to an inebriated person? I approve of such inebriation, 'for with thee, O God, is the fountain of life; and thou shalt give them to drink of the torrent of thy pleasure.' Whence will this be? 'For with thee, O God, is the fountain of life; and in thy light we shall see light.'[13] The Spirit of God is drink and light. If you would find the fountain in the darkness, you should enkindle a light, so that you might come to it. But do not enkindle a light at the fountain of light; He Himself will shine upon

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9 Cf. Eph. 5.8.
10 Cf. Gen. 1.5.
11 Ps. 117.24.
12 Cf. Eph. 5.18-20.
13 Cf. Ps. 35.9-11.

you; He will lead you to Himself. When you come to drink, approach and be enlightened. 'Come ye to him and be enlightened.'[14] Do not depart, do not be enveloped in darkness. O Lord God, call them and let them approach Thee; strengthen them, lest they depart from Thee. Make Thy sons new men; make strong men from these newly baptized; but do not make dead men of the old ones, for in this wisdom one may grow old, but one may not die.

Sermon 226

Thus you have heard it proclaimed that Christ is the Lord, because 'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God.'[1] For, if the Lord Christ had not humbled Himself, but had wished to remain always as He was, then man would have perished. We acknowledge the Word as God with God; we acknowledge that the only-begotten Son is equal to the Father; we recognize the Light from Light, Day from Day. He who made the day is the Day, not made, but begotten by the Day. If, then, Day is from Day, not made but begotten, what is the day which the Lord has made? Why is it day? Because it is light. 'And the Lord called the light Day.'[2] Let us seek the day which the Lord hath made, so that we may be glad and rejoice therein.[3] We read that, in the first stage of the world, 'darkness covered the abyss, and the spirit of God was stirring above the waters. God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. . . God separated the light from the darkness, calling the light Day and the darkness Night.'[4] Behold the day which the Lord made. But is this the day on which we ought to rejoice

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14 Ps. 33.6.

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1 John 1.1.
2 Cf. Gen. 1.5.
3 Cf. Ps. 117.24.
4 Gen. 1.2-6.

and be glad? There is another day which the Lord made and which we are under a greater obligation to acknowledge and to be glad and rejoice therein, since this was said to the faithful believers in Christ: 'You are the light of the world.'[5] If light, then certainly day, because He called the light Day. Therefore, even here on yesterday the Spirit of God moved over the waters and darkness was upon the face of the deep when these newly baptized were still bearing the weight of their sins. Hence, when their sins were forgiven through the Spirit of God, then 'God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.' Behold 'this is the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad and rejoice therein.' Let us greet this day in the words of the Apostle:[6] 'O day which the Lord hath made, you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.' He says: 'You were once darkness.' Were you or were you not? If [you think you were] not, recall your deeds; examine the sinfulness which you have repudiated. Hence, because 'you were once darkness, but now you are light,' not in yourselves but 'in the Lord, walk then as children of the light.' Let these few words be sufficient for you, since I intend to elaborate on them later and since the newly baptized are to receive today an instruction on the sacraments of the altar.

Sermon 227[1]

I am not unmindful of the promise by which I pledged myself to deliver a sermon to instruct you, who have just been baptized, on the Sacrament of the Lord's table, which you now look upon and of which you partook last night. You ought to know what you have received, what you are

5 Matt. 5.14.
6 Cf. Eph. 5.8.

1 This sermon bears a very close resemblance, in many details, to Sermon 6 (Den.), translated and discussed by D. J. Kavanagh, O.S.A., in *Fathers of the Church* 11 321-326.

going to receive, and what you ought to receive daily. That Bread which you see on the altar, consecrated by the word of God, is the Body of Christ. That chalice, or rather, what the chalice holds, consecrated by the word of God, is the Blood of Christ. Through those accidents the Lord wished to entrust to us His Body and the Blood which He poured out for the remission of sins. If you have received worthily, you are what you have received, for the Apostle says: 'The bread is one; we though many, are one body.'[2] Thus he explained the Sacrament of the Lord's table: 'The bread is one; we though many, are one body.' So, by bread you are instructed as to how you ought to cherish unity. Was that bread made of one grain of wheat? Were there not, rather, many grains? However, before they became bread, these grains were separate; they were joined together in water after a certain amount of crushing. For, unless the grain is ground and moistened with water, it cannot arrive at that form which is called bread. So, too, you were previously ground, as it were, by the humiliation of your fasting and by the sacrament of exorcism. Then came the baptism of water; you were moistened, as it were, so as to arrive at the form of bread.[3] But, without fire, bread does not yet exist. What, then, does the fire signify? The chrism. For the sacrament of the Holy Spirit is the oil of our fire. Notice this when the Acts of the Apostles are read. (Soon the reading of the book is going to begin; today the reader is beginning that book which is called the Acts of the Apostles.[4]) He who wishes to advance has the source of advancement. When you come to church, put aside empty talk; concentrate your attention on the Scriptures. We are your books. Attend, then, and see that the Holy Spirit will come on Pentecost. And thus He will come: He will show Himself in tongues of fire. For He enkindles

2 Cf. 1 Cor. 10.17.

3 See Kavanagh, *loc. cit.*, for a similar discussion and an excellent commentary.

4 In St. Augustine's time, the lector read the text from Scripture and the bishop then commented on it.

charity by which we ardently desire God and spurn the world, by which our chaff is consumed and our heart purified as gold. Therefore, the fire, that is, the Holy Spirit, comes after the water; then you become bread, that is, the body of Christ. Hence, in a certain manner, unity is signified.

You now have the sacraments in their order. At first, after the prayer, you are admonished to lift up your heart. This befits the members of Christ. For, if you have become members of Christ, where is your Head? Members have a head. If the Head had not preceded, the members would not follow. Where has your Head gone? What did you recite in the Creed? 'On the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; He sits at the right hand of the Father.' Therefore, our Head is in heaven. Hence, when the 'Lift up your heart' is said, you answer: 'We have [them lifted up] to the Lord.'[5] Then, because this lifting up of your hearts to God is a gift of God and lest you should attribute to your own strength, your own merits, and your own labors the fact that you have your hearts thus lifted up to the Lord, after the answer, 'We have our hearts lifted up to the Lord,' the bishop or priest who is officiating also says: 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God, because we have our hearts raised up to Him. Let us give thanks to Him, because if He did not give [the grace], we would have our hearts fixed on the earth.' And you bear witness to this, saying: 'It is right and just for us to give thanks to Him who caused us to raise our hearts up to our Head.'

Then, after the consecration of the Holy Sacrifice of God, because He wished us also to be His sacrifice, a fact which was made clear when the Holy Sacrifice was first instituted, and because that Sacrifice is a sign of what we are, behold, when the Sacrifice is finished, we say the Lord's Prayer which you have received and recited. After this, the 'Peace be with you' is said, and the Christians embrace one another with the holy kiss. This is a sign of peace; as the lips indicate, let

5 From the Preface of the Mass.

peace be made in your conscience, that is, when your lips draw near to those of your brother, do not let your heart withdraw from his. Hence, these are great and powerful sacraments. Do you wish to know how they are commended? The Apostle says: 'Whoever eats the body of Christ or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.'[6] What does it mean to receive unworthily? To receive in mockery, to receive in contempt. Let the Sacrament not appear of trifling value to you because you look upon it. What you see passes; but the invisible, that which is not seen, does not pass; it remains. Behold, it is received; it is eaten; it is consumed. Is the body of Christ consumed? Is the Church of Christ consumed? Are the members of Christ consumed? God forbid! Here they are cleansed; there they will be crowned. Therefore, what is signified will last eternally, even though it seems to pass. Receive, then, so that you may ponder, so that you may possess unity in your heart, so that you may always lift up your heart. Let your hope be, not on earth, but in heaven; let your faith be firm and acceptable to God. Because you now believe what you do not see, you are going to see there where you will rejoice eternally.

Sermon 228

(1) Since, after the exercises of last night,[1] the flesh is weak even though the spirit is eager, I should not detain you by a sermon. Nevertheless, I owe you a few words. These days, on which, after the Passion of the Lord our God we sing 'Alleluia,' we joyfully celebrate as feasts right up to Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was sent down from

6 Cf. 1 Cor. 11.27.

1 On the vigil of Easter Sunday, the candidates for baptism, that is, the '*competentes*,' were exorcised from the influence of demons, then baptized, and subsequently confirmed. The Mass of Easter Sunday followed, at which the newly baptized received Holy Communion. See discussion in Kavanagh, *loc. cit.* 323.

heaven. Of these days, the seven or eight which are now in progress are set aside for the sacraments of the newly baptized. Those persons, who not long ago were called *competentes,* are now called *infantes.* They were said to be *competentes* because they were beating against their mother's womb, seeking to be born; they are now called *infantes* because they, who were first born to the world, are now born to Christ. In them has been effected for the first time what ought to be strengthened in you. May you who are now believers furnish them example which will lead, not to their destruction, but to their salvation. For they, new-born, observe how you, who were born some time ago, live. Even they who are born according to Adam do this. At first they are but little ones. After they have begun to observe the ways of their elders, they note what they are going to imitate. And, since the younger follows wherever the older leads, it is much to be desired that the older proceed by a good path, lest, in following, the younger perish as well as the older. And so, my brethren, I address you who, to a certain extent, by reason of the duration of your regeneration, are their parents. I exhort you so to live that you may rejoice, not perish, with those who imitate you. The newly born notices some inebriate or other; I fear that he says to himself: 'Why is he one of the faithful when he drinks so much?' He notices some usurer, some gloomy debtor, some grim tax collector, and he says to himself: 'I shall do likewise.' He receives the answer: 'Now you are one of the faithful; do not act in this way. You have been baptized; you are reborn. Your hopes have been changed; let your character also be changed.' And he replies: 'Why are this one and that one among the faithful?' I do not wish to say more, for who could mention everything? Therefore, my brethren, when you, who are now believers, live badly, you will render a poor account to God of yourselves and also of these newly baptized.

(2) Now I address them, the newly born, so that they may be the grain on the threshing floor; that they may not follow and perish with the chaff which is tossed about by

the wind; but that by the weight of charity they may remain and come to the kingdom of immortality. Therefore, I beseech you my brethren, you my sons, you the new offshoots of our mother, the Church. By what you have received I beseech you to focus your attention on Him who called you, who loved you, who sought you when you were lost, who enlightened you when you were found. I beg you not to follow the paths of ruined souls among whom the name of believers is lost. For, we do not ask why they are called, but whether their lives are in harmony with their name. If one has been reborn, where is his new life? If he is one of the faithful, where is his faith? I hear the name; let me recognize the reality. Choose for yourselves as worthy of imitation those who fear God, those who enter the church with reverential fear, those who hear the word of God with diligence, keeping it in mind, pondering it in their thoughts, and carrying it out in their deeds. Choose those whom you may imitate. Let your heart not say: 'And where shall we find such men?' Be such, and you will find like characters. All things cling to their likes; if you have lived in a profligate fashion, no one but a profligate will attach himself to you. Begin to live well and you will see how many companions will gather around you and in how great a brotherhood you will rejoice. Finally, if you do not find what you may imitate, then be what somebody else may imitate.

(3) I am under an obligation to give to those who are newly born a sermon at the altar of God concerning the Sacrament of the altar. I have placed before them what they ought to believe about the sacrament of the Creed; I have discussed the sacrament of the Lord's Prayer and how they should say it; and I have also treated of the sacrament of the font and baptism. All these subjects they have heard discussed, and they have accepted them as handed down. Concerning the Sacrament of the holy altar, which they have seen today, however, they have heard nothing. Today a sermon on this subject is their due, but it ought to be brief both because of our fatigue and their edification.

FOR THE EASTER SEASON

Sermon 229

On the Sacraments of the Faithful[1]

BECAUSE HE [the Lord] suffered for us, He left us in this Sacrament His Body and Blood which He made even as He made us, also. For we have become His Body, and through His mercy we are what we receive. Remember: once you did not exist; you have been created. You were brought to the threshing floor of the Lord; by the labors of oxen, that is, of those preaching the Gospel, you have been threshed. When as catechumens you were being temporarily deferred, you were under observation in the granary. Then you were enrolled;[2] the grinding process, achieved by fastings and exorcisms, began. Afterwards you came to the font; you were sprinkled and you became one [with the whole mass]; by the application of the burning

1 This sermon is evidently a fragment. It is practically identical with sections of Sermon 6 (Den.) as translated by D. J. Kavanagh in Volume 11 of this series.

2 The formal petition for the reception of baptism was indicated by giving one's name (*nomen dare*).

heat of the Holy Spirit you were baked and you became the bread of the Lord.

Behold what you have received! Therefore, just as you see that the bread which was made is one mass, so may you also be one Body by loving one another, by having one faith, one hope, and an undivided charity. When heretics receive this Sacrament, they receive testimony against themselves, because they seek division, while this bread indicates unity. Thus, too, the wine existed in many clusters of grapes; and now it is one. It is one in the beautiful golden cup after the crushing of the grapes in the wine-press. And now you, in the name of Christ, have come to the chalice of the Lord, after your fasts, your labors, your humiliations, and your contrition. There you are on the table, and there you are in the chalice, for you are one with us. We receive [His Body] together, and we drink [His Blood] together because we live together.

Sermon 230

On the Verse: 'This is the day which the Lord hath made'

What we have sung to our Lord let us put into practice by His help. To be sure, every day has been made by the Lord, but with good reason has it been said of a particular day: 'This is the day which the Lord hath made.'[1] We read that, when He created heaven and earth, 'God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. . . . And God called the light Day, and the darkness Night.'[2] But there is another day, well established and definitely to be commended by us, concerning which the Apostle says: 'Let us walk becomingly as in the day.' That day, commonly called 'today,' is caused by the rising and setting of the sun. There is still another

1 Ps. 117.24.
2 Cf. Gen. 1.3-6.

day by which the word of God shines on the hearts of the faithful and dispels the darkness, not of the eyes, but of evil habits. Let us, therefore, recognize this light; let us rejoice in it; let us hearken to the Apostle when he says: 'For we are children of the light and children of the day. We are not of night nor of darkness.'[3] 'Let us walk becomingly as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in debauchery and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and as for the flesh, take no thought for its lusts.'[4] If you do this, you sing with your whole heart: 'This is the day which the Lord hath made.' For, if you live well, you are what you sing. How many are inebriated throughout these days? How many, not content with being intoxicated throughout these days, add base and cruel strife? Such persons do not sing: 'This is the day which the Lord hath made.' To them the Lord says: 'You are darkness; I have not made you.' If you wish to be the 'day which the Lord hath made,' live well; and you will possess the light of truth which will never set in your hearts.

Sermon 231

On the Resurrection according to St. Mark

(1) According to our custom, during these days the account of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is read from all the books of the holy Gospel. In this selection [from Mark] we notice how the Lord Jesus Himself chided His disciples, His first members who remained close to Him, because they did not believe that He, over whom they grieved as dead, was now alive.[1] They were the fathers of the faith,

3 Cf. 1 Thess. 5.5.
4 Rom. 13.13,14.

1 Cf. Mark 16.14.

but not yet were they believers. They did not yet believe, although they were made teachers so that the whole world might believe what they were destined to preach and what they were going to die for. They did not yet believe that He, whom they had seen raising others from the dead, had arisen Himself. Deservedly, then, were they rebuked. They were revealed to themselves so that they might recognize what they were through their own efforts and what they would be through Him. Thus, too, Peter was revealed to himself, in that he manifested presumption when the Passion of the Lord was imminent, but wavered when the actual suffering materialized. In person he saw himself; in person he grieved himself; in person he wept over himself; he turned to Him who had made him.[2] Behold, they still did not believe, although they now saw. What has been His condescension in permitting us to believe what we do not see! We believe the words of those who did not trust their own eyes.

(2) Moreover, the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is a new life for those who believe in Jesus, and this is the sacrament of His Passion and Resurrection which you ought to know and discuss. For, with good reason, Life came to death; with good reason, He, the Fountain of Life, whence one drinks in order to live, drank this chalice when He was under no obligation to do so. Truly, Christ was under no obligation to die. Let us examine the source from which death arose. Sin is the father of death. If there had been no sin, there would have been no death. The first man received the law of God, that is, the command of God, with this stipulation: that, if he kept the law, he would live; if he violated it, he would die. By not believing that he was going to die, man brought about his own death; and he discovered that He who had given the law had said what was true. Thence [came] death; thence, mortality; thence, fatigue; thence, wretchedness; thence, even after the first death, came a second death, that is, after the death in time

2 Cf. Matt. 26.33-35, 69-75.

came death for all eternity. Therefore, every man is born subject to this condition of death, subject to these laws of the lower world, with the sole exception of that Man who became Man so that man might not perish. For He came, hampered by no laws of death, as the Psalmist says: 'Free among the dead.'[3] Without concupiscence a virgin conceived Him to whom she, still a virgin, gave birth, remaining a virgin. He lived without sin; He did not die because of His own sin; He shared with us our punishment, but not our sin. Death is the punishment of sin. The Lord Jesus Christ came to die; He did not come to sin. By sharing with us the penalty without the sin, He cancelled both the penalty and the sin. What penalty did He cancel? That which was destined for us after this life. Hence, He was crucified, so that on the cross He might show the destruction of our old man; and He rose again so that He might point out the newness of our life. For thus the apostolic teaching expresses it: 'He was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification.'[4] To symbolize this fact, circumcision was imposed upon the ancients, so that on the eighth day every male child was circumcised.[5] The circumcision was performed with stone knives[6] 'because Christ was the Rock.'[7] That circumcision typified the stripping off of the carnal life on the eighth day through the Resurrection of Christ. For the seventh day of the week is completed by the sabbath. On the sabbath, the seventh day being the day of the sabbath, the Lord lay in the tomb. He arose on the eighth day; and His Resurrection renews us. Therefore, by rising on the eighth day He circumcises us; in this hope we live.

(3) Let us hearken to the Apostle when he says: 'If you have risen with Christ.' How do we rise when we are not

3 Ps. 87.6.
4 Cf. Rom. 4.25.
5 Cf. Gen. 17.12.
6 Cf. Jos. 5.2.
7 Cf. 1 Cor. 10.4.

yet dead? What, then, is it that the Apostle intended to say by the words: 'If you have risen with Christ'? Would Christ have risen again if He had not first died? Was the Apostle addressing persons who were still living, not yet dying, and yet rising again? What does he mean? Consider what he says: 'If you have risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on earth. For you have died.'[8] The Apostle himself says that, not I; nevertheless, he tells the truth, and for that reason I, too, say it. Why do I say it? 'I have believed, therefore have I spoken.'[9] If we are living well, we are dead, and we have risen. Moreover, he who is not yet dead and has not risen is still living badly; and if he is living badly, he is not living; let him die, lest he die. What does that mean, 'let him die, lest he die'? Let him change himself, lest he be condemned. 'If you have risen with Christ,' I repeat the words of the Apostle, 'seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, your life, shall appear, then you too will appear with him in glory.'[10] These are the words of the Apostle. I bid him, who is not yet dead, to die; I bid him, who is still living badly, to change himself. For, if he used to live badly and is not now doing so, he has died; if he is now living well, he has risen again.

(4) But what does it mean to live well? It means to seek 'the things that are above, not the things that are on earth.' How long are you going to be earth and how long are you returning into earth?[11] How long are you going to lick the earth? By loving the earth you certainly lick it, and you become an enemy of Him of whom the Psalmist says: 'And

8 Col. 3.1-3.
9 Ps. 115.1.
10 Col. 3.1-5.
11 Cf. Gen. 3.19.

his enemies shall lick the ground.'[12] What were you? Sons of men. What are you? Sons of God. 'O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? why do you love vanity and seek after lying?'[13] What lying do you seek? Now I shall tell you. I know that you wish to be happy. Show me a robber, a scoundrel, a fornicator, an evil-doer, a law-breaker, a person stained with all vices, steeped in all crimes or outrages, who does not wish to be happy. I know you all wish to live happily, but you do not wish to find out what it is that makes a man live happily. You seek gold because you think that you will acquire happiness from the possession of gold, but gold does not make men happy. Why do you seek for what is deceptive? Why do you wish to be exalted in this world? Because you think that you will acquire happiness from the honor of men and from worldly display? But worldly display does not make men happy. Why do you seek lying and whatever else you seek here? When you seek in a worldly fashion, when you seek through love of the earth, when you seek by clinging to the earth, you seek for one purpose, that is, to be happy; but no earthly object makes you happy. Why do you not cease to look for what is deceptive? What, then, will make you happy? 'O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart?' Do you, who thus weigh down your hearts with earth, not wish to be dull of heart? How long were men dull of heart? Until Christ came, until Christ rose again, men were dull of heart. 'How long will you be dull of heart? why do you love vanity, and seek after lying?' Though you wish to be happy, you are seeking things which make you unhappy. What you are seeking is betraying you; what you are seeking is a lie.

(5) Do you wish to be happy? If you wish, I shall show you how you may be happy. Continue to read that passage: 'How long will you be dull of heart? why do you love vanity and seek after lying? Know ye—.' What?—'that the Lord

12 Ps. 71.9.
13 Ps. 4.3.

hath made his holy one wonderful.'[14] Christ came to our miseries. He was hungry and thirsty; He was weary and He slept; He worked wonders and He suffered evils; He was scourged, crowned with thorns, covered with spittle, beaten with cudgels, fixed to a cross, wounded with a lance, placed in a tomb. But He rose again on the third day when His work was finished and death was dead. Lo, keep your eye fixed on His Resurrection, because 'the Lord hath made his holy one wonderful' to such a degree that He raised Him from the dead, and bestowed upon Him the honor of sitting at His right hand in heaven. He showed you what you ought to attend to, if you wish to be happy, for here on earth you cannot be happy. In this life you cannot be happy; no one can. You seek what is good, but earth is not the source of that which you seek. What are you seeking? A happy life. But it is not available here. If you were looking for gold in a place where it did not exist, would not he who knew that it was not there say to you: 'Why are you digging? Why are you plowing up the earth? You are digging a trench to descend into a place where you will find nothing.' What are you going to answer the one who proffers you this advice? 'I am looking for gold.' And he answers: 'I do not tell you that what you seek is of no importance, but I do say that it is not in the place where you are looking for it.' Likewise, when you say: 'I desire to be happy,' [the answer may be given:] 'You seek what is good, but it is not in this place.' If Christ had happiness here, so also will you. But notice what He found in this land of your death. When He came from another region, what did He find here except what abounds here? With you He ate what is plentiful in the cellar of your wretchedness. He drank vinegar here; He had gall, too. Behold, what He found in your cellar!

However, He has invited you to His own table abounding in all good things, the table of heaven, the table of the angels where He Himself is the bread. Coming, then, and finding

14 Ps. 4.3-5.

these unpalatable viands in your cellar, He did not disdain such a table as yours, but He promised you His own. And what does He say to us? 'Believe, just believe that you will come to the good things of My table inasmuch as I did not scorn the poor things of your table.' He accepted your evil; will He not give you His good? Certainly He will. He promised His life to us; but what He has done is more unbelievable. He offered His own life to us, as if to say: 'I invite you to My life where no one dies, where life is truly blessed, where food is not corrupted, where it refreshes and does not fail. Behold the place to which I invite you, to the abode of the angels, to the friendship of the Father and of the Holy Spirit, to the eternal banquet, to My companionship, finally, to Me Myself and to My life do I invite you. Do you not wish to believe that I will give you My life? Take My death as a pledge.' Now, therefore, while we are living in this corruptible flesh, by changing our ways, let us die with Christ; by loving justice, let us live with Christ. We shall not gain the happy life unless we shall have come to Him who came to us and unless we shall have begun to live with Him who died for us.

Sermon 232

On the Resurrection of Christ according to St. Luke

(1) The account of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ was read aloud again today, but from another book of the Gospels, that is, according to Luke. At first, naturally, it was read according to Matthew, yesterday according to Mark, and today according to Luke. This is the usual order of the Evangelists. For, as the account of the Passion has been written by all the Evangelists, so these seven or eight days give an opportunity for reading the account of the Resurrection from each of them. However, because the account of the Passion is read on only one day, the custom

is to read it from Matthew only. Once I wished that the account of the Passion might be read, year by year, from each of the Evangelists in turn. This was done, but people were disturbed because they did not hear what they had become accustomed to hear. He who loves the Scriptures of God, and who does not wish to be ignorant forever, keeps in touch with new findings and diligently examines all things. But each one makes progress in proportion as God has granted to each his measure of faith.

(2) Let us now attend to what we heard when the Gospel was read today (for what I presented to your Charity yesterday we heard in greater detail today, namely, the disciples' lack of belief), so that we may appreciate how great a favor was bestowed upon us by His kindness in that we believe what we have not seen. He called them; He instructed them; He lived with them on earth; He performed great miracles before their eyes, even to the extent of bringing the dead back to life. He raised the dead to life, but His disciples did not believe that He had power to raise Himself to life. The women came to the sepulchre and they did not find His body; angels told them that the Lord had risen and the women brought the word to the men. And what is written? What have you just heard? 'These words seemed to them to be nonsense.'[1] Oh, humanity's great lack of discernment! When Eve told what the Serpent had said, she was believed immediately. Credence is given to a woman who tells a lie resulting in our death; women who tell truth calculated to make us live are not believed. If women were not worthy to be believed, why did Adam believe Eve? If women were worthy to be believed, why did the disciples not believe the holy women? Hence, we must give thought to the gracious providence of our Lord in this incident. For this was the means used by the Lord Jesus Christ so that the female sex might be the first to announce that He had risen. Because man's fall was occasioned by womankind, man's restoration

1 Cf. Luke 24.11.

was accomplished through womankind, since a virgin brought forth Christ and a woman announced that He had risen from the dead. Through a woman came death; through a woman came life. But the disciples did not believe what the women announced; they thought these women were speaking foolishly when, nevertheless, they were telling the truth.

(3) Consider, two other disciples while walking along the road were discussing those events which had taken place in Jerusalem, namely, the crime of the Jews and the death of Christ. While they walked, they talked, grieving for Him as if He were dead and completely unaware that He had risen again. He appeared to them, became a third traveler, and mingled with them in friendly conversation. 'Their eyes were held, that they should not recognize Him,'[2] for it was fitting that their hearts be better instructed. Recognition was deferred. He questioned them as to what they were discussing, so that they might disclose to Him what He knew already. And, as you have heard, they began to wonder that they were questioned by one who seemed to know nothing about so well-known and manifest an event. They said: 'Art thou the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there?' And 'he said to them, "What things?" . . . Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in work.'[3] (Is He that, O disciples? Was Christ, the Lord of Prophets, only a Prophet? You are giving to your judge the name of herald.) They had turned to the words of others. What did I say—the words of others? Recall, when Jesus Himself said to His disciples: 'Who do men say the Son of Man is?' they gave in reply the opinion of others. 'Some say you are Elias; others, John the Baptist; others, Jeremias or one of the prophets.' Those were the words of others, not of the disciples. Behold, the disciples heard these very words: 'Now, therefore, who do you say that I am? You have given me the opinions of others; I wish to

2 Luke 24.16.

3 Luke 24.18,19.

hear your own belief.' Then, because unity prevailed among them all, Peter alone spoke for all saying: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Not anyone whatsoever of the Prophets, but the Son of the living God; the Fulfiller of the prophecies, and the Creator of the angels. 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Then Peter heard what he deserved to hear after such a statement made in such words: 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven. And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'[4] Faith, not man, merited to hear these words. For what was man except what the Psalmist says: 'Every man is a liar.'[5]

(4) Then, immediately after these words, He announced His passion and death to them. Peter was alarmed and he said: 'Far be it from thee, O Lord; this will not happen.' Then the Lord said: 'Get behind me, Satan.'[6] Peter, Satan? Where are those words: 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona'? Is Satan blessed? Blessed [by the gift] of God; Satan [by the malice] of man. Finally, the Lord Himself showed why He had called Peter, Satan, in the words: 'For thou dost not mind the things of God, but those of men.' Why, then, was Peter blessed? Because 'flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven.' Why was he called Satan later on? 'Thou dost not mind the things of God; when you did mind them, you were happy; but now you mind the things of men.' Behold how the spirit of the disciples fluctuated, as if rising and falling; now lifted up, now prostrate; now illuminated, now in darkness, because it was

4 Cf. Matt. 16.13-20.
5 Ps. 115.11.
6 Cf. Matt. 16.22,23.

illuminated by God but wrapped in dark shadows by its own deeds. How was their spirit illuminated? 'Come ye to him and be enlightened.'[7] How was it enveloped in darkness? 'When he tells a lie he speaks from his very nature.'[8] Peter had said that He [Christ] was the Son of the living God, and yet he feared that He would die, although He was the Son of God and had come for that very purpose, that is, to die. If He had not come to die, how would we live?

(5) Why was life given to us and death to Christ? Hear the sacred Scripture: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God.'[9] Seek death there. Where? Why? In what manner? He was the Word; the Word was with God; the Word was God. If you find flesh and blood there, you find death. Why, therefore, did death come to the Word? Why, on the other hand, did life come to us, men placed upon earth, mortal, corrupt, and sinners? There was no reason why He should experience death; there likewise was no reason why we should enjoy life. He accepted the death merited by our misdeeds, that He might give us life by His merits. How did He accept the death merited by us? 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' He accepted from us here below what He would offer for us. But how did life come to us? 'And the life was the light of men.'[10] He Himself was life for us; we were death for Him. What sort of death? Death by condescension, not by natural exigency; He died by His own power because He so deigned, because He wished it, because He had compassion. He said: 'I have the power to lay down my life, and I have the power to take it up again.'[11] This declaration was not known by Peter when he trembled at the Lord's prediction of His death. But, behold, the Lord had already foretold that He would die and that He would rise again

7 Ps. 33.6.
8 John 8.44.
9 John 1.1.
10 John 1.14,4.
11 Cf. John 10.18.

on the third day.[12] What He had predicted took place, and yet they did not believe what they had heard. 'Behold, today is the third day since these things came to pass. We were hoping that it was he who should redeem Israel.'[13] (You were hoping, and now you are despairing? Have you fallen from your hope? He who walks with you raises you.) They were His disciples; they had heard Him; they had lived with Him; they had recognized Him as their Teacher; they had been instructed by Him; yet they could not imitate and hold to the faith of the thief who hung upon a cross!

(6) But, perhaps, some of you may not know what I have already said about that robber, because you have not heard the account of the Passion according to all the Evangelists. As a matter of fact, Luke has related what I am going to discuss. Matthew[14] also says that two robbers were crucified with Christ, but Luke,[15] not Matthew, tells us that one of the two robbers reviled the Lord, while the other believed in Christ. Let us call to mind the faith which Christ found in the thief but did not find in His own disciples after the Resurrection. Christ was hanging on the cross, and the robbers were hanging there, too; He in the middle, they on either side. One thief reviled; the other believed; He, placed between them, passed judgment. For, he who scoffed said: 'If thou art the Son of God, save thyself.' And the other thief answered: 'Dost not even thou fear God? Though we suffer justly on account of our deeds, what has He done?' Turning to the Lord, he said: 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' O great faith! I do not know what can be added to such faith! They who had seen Christ raising the dead faltered; he who saw Him hanging on the cross believed. When they wavered, he believed. What a return Christ took from this dry wood! Let us hear what

12 Cf. John 2.19.
13 Cf. Luke 24.21.
14 Cf. Matt. 27.38.
15 Cf. Luke 23.39-43.

the Lord said to him: 'Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise. You put yourself aside; but I acknowledge you as my own.' When would a robber have hope, [passing] from robbery to his judge, from his judge to the cross, from the cross to paradise? Finally, he himself, cognizant of his deserts, did not say: 'Remember me, so that you may free me today,' but, rather, 'when thou comest into thy kingdom, [then] remember me, so that, if punishment awaits me, it may be only until you come into your kingdom.' And the Lord answered: 'Not so. You have taken the kingdom of heaven by storm; you have forced an entry; you have believed; you have seized it. This day thou shalt be with me in paradise. I do not put you aside; this very day I pay what I owe to such great faith.' The thief said: 'Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' Not only did he believe that the Lord would rise again, but he also believed that He would reign. To One hanging on a cross, crucified, blood-stained, immovably fixed, he said: 'When thou comest into thy kingdom.' And the disciples said: 'We were hoping.' Where a thief found hope, the disciples lost it.

(7) Now, then, my dearly beloved, hear about the great sacrament which we appreciate. He walked with them; He shared their hospitality; He broke bread with them; and He was recognized.[16] Let us not say that we do not recognize Christ; we know Him if we believe. It is not enough to say we know Him if we believe; we possess Him if we believe. They had Christ at their table; we have Him in our soul. It means more to have Christ in one's heart than in one's house, for our heart is more intimately a part of us than our house is. Now, in truth, when should the believer recognize Him? He who believes knows Him; however, he who is a catechumen does not know Him. Yet, let no one close the door against Him so that he may come to know Him.

Yesterday I brought to your attention, and today I recall

16 Cf. Luke 24.21-31.

to your Charity, that the risen Christ is in us if we live well, if our former evil life is dead, and if a new life is daily making progress.[17] There are penitents here in great numbers. When the blessing is given, the line is very long, indeed. Pray, O penitents; even penitents go up to pray. I examine penitents and I find them living badly. How are they repenting of what they are doing? If they are repentant, let them not commit these sins; if sins continue to be committed, their name is a mistake; their guilt remains. Some have sought the status of penitents for themselves; some, excommunicated by me, have been brought back to a state of penitence. Those who have sought this state for themselves wish to do just what they were doing; and those who, after having been excommunicated by me, have been brought to a state of repentance are unwilling to rise from thence as if the status of penitents were something subject to their own choice. Hence, what ought to be a place of humility becomes a place of iniquity. I address you who are called penitents without being so. I speak to you. What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? No, in this I do not praise you; on the contrary, I groan and lament.

(8) What shall I do, since I have become a worthless song, repeating my petition: 'Change yourselves, change yourselves.' The end of life is uncertain. Every man walks about at his own risk. Why do you delay to live well, thinking that life will be long? You are planning on a long life; do you not fear a sudden death? But [you say] it may be long; and I, meanwhile, look for one penitent and do not find one. How much better will a long good life be than an evil one? No one wishes to endure a long-drawn-out, distasteful banquet; and yet all wish to have a long evil life. Indeed, if the fact that we are alive is a great thing, let it be a great good, also. As a matter of fact, tell me what evil do you wish in all your actions, thoughts, and desires? You do not wish for bad land; you certainly do not wish for a bad,

17 See Sermon 231.2,3.

but rather for a good, crop. Likewise, you desire a good tree, a good horse, a good servant, a good friend, a good son, a good wife. Why do I enumerate these big things, seeing that you do not desire even poor clothing, but prefer good garments. Finally, you do not wish for shoes unless they are good. Show me anything evil that you desire and anything good that you do not crave. I am of the opinion that you wish for a good home, not a poor one; is your soul the only poor possession you desire? Why have you been a stumbling block to yourself? Why have you merited so badly at your own hands? Among your goods you wish for nothing evil except yourself. Consider that I am saying just what I usually say and that you are doing just what you usually do. Before God I rend my garments in fear lest I be rebuked for not having spoken thus. I am performing my duty; I seek results from you; I wish to get joy, not money, from your good works. For he who lives well does not make me wealthy; and yet, let one live well and he does enrich me. My riches are nothing unless your hope is in Christ. My joy, my solace, and even my breathing-in of dangers during these trials are nothing unless your life is good. I beseech you, my brethren, if you are unmindful of yourselves, have pity on me.

Sermon 233

On the Resurrection of Christ according to St. Mark

(1) You have heard the lesson from the holy Gospel on the Resurrection of Christ. Our faith has been established on the Resurrection of Christ. Pagans, wicked people, and Jews believed in the Passion of Christ; Christians alone believe in His Resurrection. The Passion of Christ discloses the miseries of this life; the Resurrection of Christ points to the happiness of the life to come. At present, let us labor; let us

hope for the future. Now is the time for work; then, for reward. He who is lazy in doing his work here is shameless if he demands recompense. You have heard what the Lord said to His disciples after the Resurrection. He sent them to preach the Gospel and they carried out His command; the Gospel was preached; it has come to us. Behold: 'Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth: and their words unto the ends of the world.'[1] By one journey after another the Gospel came to us and to the farthest limits of our country. In a few words the Lord sketched His plan for us, telling His disciples what we were to do and what we were to hope for. As you heard when the Gospel was read, He said: 'He who believes and is baptized shall be saved.'[2] Faith is demanded of us; salvation is offered to us. 'He who believes and is baptized shall be saved.' Precious is the gift which is promised to us; what is bidden [faith] is fulfilled without cost.

'He who believes and is baptized shall be saved.' What then? Were not those who heard these words safe? Do not many who are already safe believe? Are they not safe before they believe? Obviously, they are safe, but 'Vain is the salvation of men.'[3] What is the nature of that safety which you share with your beast of burden? Whence does it derive unless from Him of whom Scripture says: 'Men and beasts thou wilt preserve, O Lord,' and the passage continues: 'according to the multitude of thy mercies, O God.'[4] So great is the multitude of Thy mercies that safety comes to the mortal flesh of men and to the flesh of beasts as well. This is the multitude of Thy mercies. What about Thy sons? Behold, 'men and beasts thou wilt preserve, O Lord.' Is there nothing more for us? Is what is furnished to any men whatsoever and to beasts furnished to us also? Clearly, this is not so.

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1 Ps. 18.5.
2 Mark 16.16.
3 Cf. Ps. 59.13.
4 Cf. Ps. 35.7.

(2) As a matter of fact, what else is there? Hear: 'The children of men shall put their trust under the covert of thy wings. They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure. For with thee is the fountain of life.'[5] Christ is this Fountain of Life. We possessed safety in conjunction with the beasts until the Fountain of Life came to us. The Fountain of Life came to us and died for us. Will He deny His life when He paid out His death for us? This is the salvation which is not vain, and why? Because it does not pass away.

The distinction made in that passage is worthy of notice. 'Men and beasts thou wilt preserve, O Lord,' that is, men as human beings. 'But the children of men shall put their trust under the covert of thy wings,' that is, men who belong to the Son of Man. Set before your eyes two men. Stir up your faith; let your heart keep watch. Recall the memory of the man who deceived us; remember the Man who redeemed us. Was not the latter the Son of Man? Adam was man, but not the son of man. The Lord Christ constantly speaks of Himself as the Son of Man to make us remember the man who was not a son of man, so that we may be mindful of death in the one and life in the other; of sin in the one and remission of sins in the other; of enslavement in the one and of freedom in the other; of condemnation in the one and of acquittal in the other. Therefore, those two men were indicated in that passage: 'Men and beasts thou wilt preserve, O Lord,' that is, 'men' as human beings and 'beasts' along with which 'thou wilt preserve' the men. For man, placed in honor, did not understand, as the Scripture says: 'And man when he was in honor did not understand; he is compared to senseless beasts and is become like to them.'[6] Wherefore, 'thou wilt preserve, O Lord, men and beasts,' men who have become like to beasts because they did not

5 Ps. 35.8-11.
6 Ps. 48.13.

understand, and beasts to which men have been compared and over which man was created to rule.

(3) But is that the safety of which the Scripture says: 'He who believes and is baptized shall be saved'?[7] No, there is another, far different salvation. The angels possess it; do not look for it on earth. It is great, but it is not here. That blessing is not a product of this region; such safety is not here on earth. Lift up your heart. Why do you seek this safety here on earth? This salvation came hither and here found our death. Did our Lord Jesus find this salvation here when He came to us in human form? He, coming as a Merchant from His own region, brought something great indeed; but that Merchant found in our country only what abounds here. And what is plentiful here? Birth and death. The earth is full of these two wares: birth and death. He was born; and He died. But in what way was He born? He came to this country of ours, but not in the same way in which He came to us. For He came from heaven, from His Father. Yet He was born as a mortal; He was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. Were we so born of Adam and Eve? No, we were born through concupiscence of the flesh; but He was not, for Mary was a virgin, without human intercourse, without the heat of passion, since to save her from this heat of passion the promise was made to her: 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.'[8] Therefore, Mary conceived without human intercourse, but she believed and she conceived. To mortal eyes, then, He was born as a mortal. Why as a mortal? Because He was 'in the likeness of sinful flesh,'[9] not in sinful flesh, but in the 'likeness of sinful flesh.' What does sinful flesh have? Death and sin. What does the likeness of sinful flesh have? Death without sin. If it had sin, it would be sinful flesh; if it did not have death, it would

7 Mark 16.16.
8 Luke 1.35.
9 Rom. 8.3.

not be the likeness of sinful flesh. As such He came; He came as Saviour. He died, but He vanquished death; in Himself He put an end to what we feared; He took it upon Himself and He vanquished it, as a mighty Hunter He captured and slew the lion.

(4) Where is death? Seek it in Christ, for it exists no longer; but it did exist and now it is dead. O Life, O Death of death! Be of good heart; it will die in us, also. What has taken place in our Head will take place in His members; death will die in us, also. But when? At the end of the world, at the resurrection of the dead in which we believe and concerning which we do not doubt. For 'he who believes and is baptized shall be saved.' Read the following words, which are calculated to make you fear: 'He who does not believe shall be condemned.'[10] Therefore, death will die in us; but it will prevail in those who are condemned. Where death will not know death there will be everlasting death, because there will be everlasting torments. In us, however, it will die and it will not exist. Do you wish to understand? I am going to repeat to you a few words of those who are triumphant, that you may have something to think about, something to sing about in your heart, something to hope for with all your heart, something to seek with faith and good works. Hear the words of those who triumph where death will be no more, where death will die in us, too, as in our Head. The Apostle Paul says:[11] 'For this corruptible body must put on incorruption, and this mortal body must put on immortality. . . . Then shall come to pass the word that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." ' I have told you that death will die in us. 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' That is the death of death. It will be swallowed up so that it will not appear. What do those words 'so that it will not appear' mean? So that it will not exist, either within or without. 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' Let

10 Mark 16.16.
11 1 Cor. 15.53-55.

those who triumph rejoice. Let them rejoice and repeat the words which follow: 'O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?' Where is death? You have captured it, taken possession of it, conquered it, sentenced it, struck and killed it. 'O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?' Has not my Lord destroyed it? O death, when you embraced my Lord, then you died so far as I am concerned. In this salvation 'he shall be saved who believes and is baptized, but he who does not believe shall be condemned.' Avoid condemnation; love and hope for eternal salvation.

Sermon 234

On the Resurrection of Christ according to St. Luke

(1) During these days, the account of the Resurrection of the Lord is read aloud according to all four Evangelists. It is necessary that all four be read, because the individual Evangelists have not related all that happened. However, what one omitted another has given, and, to a certain extent, all have written in such a way that their interrelation, or harmony, is evident. Mark, the Evangelist whose Gospel was read aloud yesterday, briefly mentions one incident which Luke follows up in greater detail, that is, the account of the two disciples who, though not included in the group of twelve, were, nevertheless, disciples; and he relates how the Lord appeared to them as they were making a journey, and walked along with them. That is to say, Mark simply states that the Lord appeared to two disciples who were making a journey. The Evangelist Luke, however, tells what He said to them, what answer He gave to them, how far He walked with them, and how they recognized Him in the breaking of bread—all these points Luke brings out, as we have just heard.

(2) What, therefore, are we to discuss here, my brethren? We are to be established in our belief that the Lord Christ

rose again. We already believed that when we heard the Gospel, and believing, we have entered this church today. Nevertheless, what is recalled by our memory we hear with a certain amount of joy. How do you think my heart rejoices when we seem to be superior to those who were walking along the road and to whom the Lord appeared?[1] For we have believed what they did not believe. They had lost hope, while we have no doubt about what caused them to waver. When the Lord was crucified, they lost their hope; this was apparent when, in answer to His question: 'What words are these that you are exchanging, and why are you sad?' they replied: 'Art thou the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there?' And He asked: 'What things?' Knowing all things, He inquired about Himself, because He desired to be in them. 'What things?' He said, and they answered: 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in words and works.' Behold, we are superior to them. They called Christ a Prophet; we know that He is the Lord of Prophets. They say: 'He was a prophet, mighty in works and words . . .; and how our chief priests crucified him. And behold this is the third day since these things came to pass. But we were hoping.' You were hoping; are you no longer hoping? Is this the extent of your discipleship? A thief on a cross surpasses you. You have forgotten Him who taught you; he recognized Him with whom he was hanging on a cross. 'We were hoping.' What were you hoping? 'That it was he who should redeem Israel.' What you hoped and then lost at the crucifixion, that a crucified thief understood. For he said to the Lord: 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.'[2] Behold, because He was going to redeem Israel, that cross was His school. There the Master taught the thief. The wood upon which He was hanging has become the chair of the Teacher. But, let Him who gave Himself for you revive hope in you, for

1 Cf. Luke 24.17-22.
2 Luke 23.42.

so it was done there. Nevertheless, my dearly beloved, remember how the Lord Jesus wished those whose 'eyes were held, that they should not recognize him,'[3] to acknowledge Him in the breaking of bread. (The faithful understand what I am saying; they know Christ in the breaking of bread. For, not all bread, but only that which receives the blessing of Christ becomes the Body of Christ.) Thereupon, the disciples understood; they were filled with joy; they hurried on to the others; telling what they had seen, they found that the others already knew the truth; they added their contribution to the Gospel.[4] These things were said; they were done; they were written down; and thus they came down to us.

(3) Let us believe in Christ crucified, but let us also believe in Him who rose again on the third day. This is the faith which distinguishes us from others, from pagans and from Jews; namely, the faith by which we believe that Christ rose again from the dead. The Apostle said to Timothy: 'Remember that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and was descended from David; this is my gospel.'[5] Likewise, the same Apostle says: 'For if thou believe in thy heart that Jesus is the Lord and if thou confess with thy mouth that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.'[6] This is the salvation which I discussed yesterday,[7] in connection with the passage, 'He who believes and is baptized shall be saved.'[8] I know that you believe; hence, you will be saved. Cherish in your heart and proclaim with your lips that Christ has risen from the dead. But, have the faith of Christians, not of demons. Behold, I shall distinguish these matters for you; as far as is in my power, I shall do this and I shall discriminate for you according to the grace of God which has been

3 Luke 24.16.
4 Cf. Luke 24.31-36.
5 2 Tim. 2.8.
6 Cf. Rom. 10.9.
7 Sermon 233.
8 Mark 16.16.

given to me. Then, when I have set forth the distinctions, choose and cherish.

Behold, I have told you that the faith which marks us off from pagans is that by which we believe that Christ Jesus rose from the dead. Ask any pagan whether Christ was crucified: he declares emphatically: 'Certainly, He was.' Then ask whether He rose again; he denies it. Ask any Jew whether Christ was crucified; he acknowledges the sin of his ancestors, in which he, too, shares for he drinks the cup which those ancestors passed down to him with the words: 'His blood be on us and on our children.'[9] But ask the Jew whether Christ rose again from the dead; he will deny it, ridicule it, and accuse you. Thus we are separated. We believe that Christ, born of the seed of David according to the flesh, rose from the dead. Were the demons unaware of this, or did they not believe the things which they saw? Yet, even before He had arisen, they shouted and said: 'We know who you are, O Son of God.' We have distinguished ourselves from the pagans by our belief that Christ has risen. If we can, let us now distinguish ourselves from the demons. What is it, I ask you, what is it that the demons said? 'We know who you are, O Son of God.' And they hear the reply: 'Hold thy peace.'[10] Did they not say just what Peter said when the Lord questioned the disciples, saying: 'Who do men say I am?' When they had reported the opinions of others, He repeated His question, saying: 'But who do you say I am?' Then Peter answered: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'[11] The same statement was made by the demons and by Peter; the same by evil spirits and by the Apostle. Yet, the demons hear: 'Hold thy peace,' while Peter hears: 'Blessed art thou.' May what differentiated them also differentiate us from the demons. Why did the demons make that

9 Matt. 27.25.
10 Cf. Mark 1.24,25.
11 Cf. Matt. 16.13-17.

declaration? From fear. Why did Peter? From love. Choose, then, and cherish.

This is the faith, therefore, that distinguishes Christians from demons, not any faith whatsoever. For the Apostle James says:[12] 'Thou believest.' Yes, the Epistle of the Apostle James has this statement: 'Thou believest that there is one God. Thou dost well. The devils also believe, and tremble.' Those are the words of the Apostle who wrote in the same Epistle: 'If a man says he has faith, but does not have works, can the faith save him?' And the Apostle Paul, making a like distinction, says: 'Neither circumcision is of any avail, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works through charity.'[13] We have established and set up the distinction; rather, we have discovered the differentiating factor, we have read about it, and we have learned that it exists. Just as we are set apart by faith, let us be distinguished by our morals; let us be distinguished by our works; let us be enkindled by the fire of charity which the demons did not possess. With such a fire those two disciples also burned as they went on their way. For, when Christ had manifested Himself and was withdrawing from them, they said to one another, 'Was not our heart burning within us on the road while he explained to us the Scriptures?'[14]

Be enkindled, my brethren, that you may not burn with the fire in which the demons are destined to burn.[15] Be enkindled with the fire of charity, that you may separate yourself from the demons. That fire carries you upward, lifts you up, raises you up to heaven. No matter what troubles you have endured on earth, no matter how the Enemy overwhelms the Christian heart with humiliations, the burning ardor of love seeks the highest places. Take this by way of comparison: If you hold a small flaming torch and if you

12 James 2.19,14.
13 Gal. 5.6.
14 Cf. Luke 24.32.
15 Cf. Matt. 25.41.

lift it upward from your head, the crest of the flame will rise to heaven; if you press the torch downward, the flame still rises upward to heaven; if you turn the torch down from your head, you do not direct the flame earthward, do you? In whatsoever direction a burning object is turned, the flame knows no other path; it seeks the heavens. So, fervent in spirit, be enkindled with the fire of charity; make yourselves glow with the praises of God and unimpeachable morals. One person is hot; another, cold. Let the one who is hot warm the one who is cold. Let him who is not sufficiently on fire desire an increase of fervor; let him pray for assistance. The Lord is ready to give; let us desire to receive with open hearts. Having turned toward the Lord, etc.[16]

Sermon 235

On Luke 24.13-31

(1) On yesterday, that is, in the evening, the account of the Resurrection of the Saviour was read aloud from the Gospel. However, it was taken from the Gospel according to Matthew; today, as you have heard the reader announce, the account of the Resurrection was read according as the Evangelist Luke wrote it. You must be frequently reminded and you ought to keep in mind the fact that you should not

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16 Among the early Fathers of the Church it was customary to begin and end sermons with a short prayer. Comparatively few of St. Augustine's sermons have a prayer at the beginning, in spite of the fact that he advocated this practice in *De doctrina Christiana* 4,32. However, at the end of his sermons we frequently find the words, '*Conversi ad Dominum*,' which indicate the use of the following prayer: *Conversi ad Dominum Deum Patrem omnipotentem, puro corde ei, quantum potest parvitas nostra, maximas atque uberes gratias agamus; precantes toto animo singularem mansuetudinem eius, ut preces nostras in beneplacito suo exaudire dignetur, inimicum a nostris actibus et cogitationibus sua virtute expellat, nobis multiplicet fidem, gubernet mentem, spirituales cogitationes concedat, et ad beatitudinem suam perducat per Iesum Christum Filium eius. Amen.*

be disturbed because one Evangelist says what another omits, since he who omits what the other says also says something which the other has omitted. In fact, an individual Evangelist may make certain statements which the other three do not make; two Evangelists sometimes relate things which the other two do not mention; or three of the Evangelists tell something which the fourth omits. Nevertheless, because the one Spirit spoke through the Evangelists, the authority of the holy Gospel is so great that even what only one writer gives is true. For instance, only the Evangelist Luke relates the incident which you have heard just now, that, after the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, He met two of His disciples on the road, talking about the events which had just taken place, and that He said to them: 'What words are these that you are exchanging. . . and are sad?'[1] Mark briefly touched upon the incident, saying that the Lord appeared to the two disciples on the road,[2] but he did not mention what the disciples said to the Lord nor what the Lord said to them.

What lesson does that reading bring home to us? A very important one, if we understand. Jesus appeared; He was visible to their eyes, yet He was not recognized. The Master walked with them on the way; in fact, He was the Way on which they were not yet walking; but He found that they had wandered some distance from the Way. For, when He was with them before His Passion, He had foretold all—that He would suffer, that He would die, that He would rise again on the third day[3]—He had predicted all; but His death was as a loss of memory for them. They were so disturbed when they saw Him hanging on the cross that they forgot His teaching, did not look for His Resurrection, and failed to keep His promises in mind.

(2) The disciples said: 'We were hoping that it was he who should redeem Israel.'[4] O disciples, you were hoping!

1 Luke 24.17.
2 Cf. Mark 16.12.
3 Cf. Matt. 20.18-20.
4 Luke 24.21.

Therefore, are you no longer hoping? Behold, Christ is alive; and hope is dead in you! Certainly Christ is alive! The living Christ finds the hearts of His disciples dead. He appeared before their eyes, yet He was not manifest to them; He was visible, yet He was hidden from them. For, if He were not visible to them, how did they hear Him when He questioned them? How did they answer His questions? He walked with them on the road as a companion, yet He was their leader. Certainly they saw Him, but they did not recognize Him, for 'their eyes were held, that they should not recognize him,'[5] as we have heard today. They were not prevented from seeing Him, but they 'were held that they should not recognize him.'

Ah, my brethren, where was it that the Lord wished to be recognized? In the breaking of bread. We are safe; we break bread, and we recognize the Lord. He did not wish to be recognized except in that act, for the sake of us who were not destined to see Him in the flesh but who, nevertheless, would eat His flesh. Therefore, whoever you are who are faithful, you for whom the title Christian is not an empty name, you who do not enter this church without reason, you who hear the word of God with sentiments of fear and hope, let the breaking of bread bring consolation to you. The absence of the Lord is not real absence; have faith, and He whom you do not see is with you. When the Lord spoke to the disciples, they did not have faith; because they did not believe that He had risen, they did not hope that they could rise again. They had lost faith; they had lost hope. As dead men they walked with the Living; as dead men they walked with Life Itself. Life walked with them, but life was not yet renewed in their hearts.

(3) Therefore, if you wish to have life, do what they did that you may recognize the Lord. They received Him with gracious courtesy. Because the Lord seemed intent on proceeding further, they constrained Him. And after they had

5 Luke 24.16.

reached the place toward which they were making their way, they said: 'Now stay with us here, for it is getting toward evening.'[6] Constrain your Guest, if you wish to recognize the Saviour. Hospitality restored what unbelief had taken away. Therefore, the Lord revealed Himself in the breaking of bread. Learn where to seek the Lord; learn where to possess Him; learn where to recognize Him, that is, when you eat His Body. Truly do the faithful discern something in that reading which they understand better than they who do not discern.

The Lord Jesus was recognized and, after being recognized, He was nowhere to be seen. He withdrew His bodily presence from those who now possessed Him by faith. In fact, the Lord withdrew His corporeal presence from the whole Church and ascended into heaven, so that the faith might be built up. For, if you accept nothing except what you see, where is your faith? On the other hand, if you believe what you do not see, you will rejoice when you do see. Let your faith be strengthened because sight will be restored. What we do not see now will come. It will come, my brethren, it will come; but give thought as to how it will find you. For that will happen which men talk about, saying: 'Where is it? When is it? How is it? When will it be? When is it going to come?' Be assured, it will come. Not only will it happen, but it will happen even if you do not wish it. Woe to those who have not believed! They will be in great fear; but great joy will be the lot of those who have believed. Believers will rejoice; unbelievers will be confounded. Believers are going to say: 'Thanks be to Thee, O Lord. We have heard the truth; we have believed the truth; we have hoped for the truth; we now see the truth.' But unbelievers are going to say: 'When is it that we did not believe? When is it that we considered as lies the things which were read to us?'

(Therefore, let those be praised who do not see and yet believe, because they will rejoice when they do see. The

6 Luke 24.29.

Lord assumed flesh for our salvation and in that flesh He suffered death. He rose again on the third day, destined to die no more, and, having taken again the substance of the flesh which He had laid aside, He was the first to show us an example of incorruptible resurrection. In this same corporeal form He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, in His omnipotence sharing judgment with the Father. We hope that He will come to the judgment of the living and of the dead, so that we, too, may believe that from the dust we shall receive again the same flesh, the same bones, the same regeneration of our members, destined to last forever. We shall all rise again, but we shall not all rejoice. Scripture says:[7] 'The day is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they who have done good shall come forth unto resurrection of life; but they who have done evil unto resurrection of judgment.')[8] And so it will happen that punishment will be accorded to those who are confounded, and reward to those who have been faithful. 'For these will go into everlasting fire, but the just into eternal life.'[9] Having turned to the Lord, etc.

Sermon 236

(1) Our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Apostle says: 'died for our sins and rose again for our justification.'[1] Just as we are brought into being by His death, so by His Resurrection we come to maturity. For truly, our life is foreshadowed by His death. Hear what the Apostle says in this connection: 'For we were buried with him by means of baptism into death,

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7 Cf. John 5.28-30.

8 The section enclosed in parentheses is found in the Louvain Codex, but not in some of the other codices. Its apparent irrelevance seems to indicate that a portion of a sermon on the Creed has found its way into the original sermon.

9 Cf. Matt. 25.46.

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1 Cf. Rom. 4.25.

in order that, just as Christ has risen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life.'[2] He had nothing to atone for on the cross, because He was without sin when He was lifted up on the cross. Let us be freed from sin by His cross; let us there lay down what evil we have committed so that we may be able to be justified by His Resurrection. Indeed, you ought to emphasize the distinction between 'He was delivered up for our sins' and 'He rose again for our justification.' The Apostle did not say: 'He was delivered for our justification and He rose for our sins.' In His betrayal sin is evident; in His Resurrection, justice. Let sin die, then, and let justice rise again.

(2) When Christ died, His disciples lost completely from their souls this hope, this gift, this promise, this great grace; at His death they fell from their high hopes. Behold, His Resurrection was announced to them,[3] and the words of the messengers 'seemed to them to be nonsense.' Truth had become, as it were, nonsense. If at any time the Resurrection is preached in these days and the account seems to some listener to be nonsense, do not all agree that such a person is greatly afflicted? Do not all denounce, shun, and avoid this person, close their ears and refuse to listen to him? Behold what the disciples were after the death of Christ: they were that which we abhor. Like rams, they had the plague from which lambs shrink.

Furthermore, the words of the two disciples to whom the Lord appeared on the road, whose 'eyes were held that they should not know him,' indicate where their hearts were; and their voice is witness of what was going on in their minds—I mean so far as we are concerned, for their hearts lay wide open to Him. They were talking together about His death. He joined them as a third wayfarer, and on the way the Way began to talk, and He entered into their conversation. Although He knew all things, He inquired what

2 Rom. 6.4.
3 Cf. Luke 24.17-28.

they were discussing, so that by His apparent ignorance He might draw them to make an acknowledgment. And they said to Him: 'Art thou a stranger in Jerusalem, and dost thou not know the things that have happened there in these days, concerning Jesus of Nazareth who was a great prophet?' No longer was He the Lord, but only a Prophet. For, since He was dead, they decided that He had been merely a Prophet. Now they were honoring Him as a Prophet; they did not yet recognize Him as the Lord, not only of Prophets, but of the angels as well. They continued: 'And how our elders and chief priests delivered him up to be sentenced to death. And behold, this is the third day since these things came to pass. But we were hoping that it was he who should redeem Israel.' So that is your whole difficulty! You were hoping; and now are you in despair? You see, my brethren, they had lost hope.

Therefore, the Lord began to explain the Scriptures to them so that they might recognize Christ there where they had abandoned Him, for they had lost hope in Christ because they had seen Him dead. In fact, He opened up the Scriptures to them so that they might understand that, if He had not died, He could not be the Christ. And what He said to them, namely, 'That it was fitting for Christ to die and so to enter into his glory,' He proved from Moses, from subsequent passages, and from the Prophets. They heard, rejoiced, breathed freely again; as they themselves acknowledged, their hearts burned within them; yet they did not recognize the Light that was with them.

(3) What a mystery this is, my brethren! He enters their abode, He becomes their Guest, and Him whom they did not recognize on the road they recognize in the breaking of bread. Learn how to receive guests in whom you recognize Christ. Do you not know that, if you receive any Christian, you receive Him? Does He not say: 'I was a stranger and you took me in'? And when the reply is given: 'Lord, when did we see thee a stranger?' He answers: 'As long as you did it

for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me.'[4] Therefore, when Christian receives Christian, the members serve the members; and the Head rejoices and considers what was bestowed on His member as given to Himself. Here, then, let the hungry Christ be fed; let the thirsty Christ be given a drink; let the naked Christ be clothed; let the stranger Christ be sheltered; let the sick Christ be visited. The exigency of our journey makes this an obligation, for, on our journey through life, we must live where Christ is in need. He is in need in His followers; of Himself He has no need. But He, who is needy in His followers and who abounds in Himself, draws all the needy to Himself. There they will find no hunger, no thirst, no nakedness, no sickness, no wandering about, no suffering, no sorrow. I know that these things will not be in His presence, but I do not know what will be there. In other words, I know what will not be there, but what we are going to find there 'eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man.'[5] We can love, we can desire, we can sigh after so great a good on this journey of ours; but we cannot adequately imagine it or describe it. Certainly, I cannot do so. Therefore, my brethren, seek one who can do so. If you succeed in finding such a person, bring me along with you as a disciple. This much I do know: 'He who is able to do more than we ask or conceive,'[6] as the Apostle says, will bring us to that place where that will happen which has been written: 'Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, . . . they shall praise thee for ever and ever.'[7] Our whole task will be the praise of God. What shall we praise if we do not love? And shall we love that which we do not see? But we shall see what is true; and what is true will be God whom we shall praise. There we shall find what we have sung today: 'Amen. It is true! Alleluia! Praise the Lord!'

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4 Matt. 25.35,38,40.
5 1 Cor. 2.9.
6 Cf. Eph. 3.20.
7 Cf. Ps. 83.5.

Sermon 237

On the Last Reading from the Gospel of St. Luke (24.37-39)

(1) Today the account of the Resurrection of the Lord according to the Gospel of Luke was brought to a close when we heard of the Lord's appearance in the midst of His disciples who, in unbelief, were disputing about His Resurrection. As a matter of fact, His appearance was so unexpected and unbelievable that, seeing, they did not see. For they saw Him alive whom they were lamenting as dead; they saw Him standing in their midst whom they had grieved over when He hung on the cross. They saw, therefore, and because they did not believe that their own eyes were seeing aright, they thought they were deceived. For they 'thought that they saw a spirit,'[1] as you have heard. The wavering Apostles anticipated what the worst heretics later believed about Christ. For there are people today who do not believe that Christ had a body,[2] because they rule out the parturition of a virgin and they refuse to believe that Christ was born

1 Luke 24.37.

2 The Manichaeans were members of a religious sect introduced by Mani, a Persian, in the third century. The foundation of this system based upon Babylonian, Chaldean, and Persian beliefs was the dualism of two eternal principles or kingdoms that are opposed: the one of Light, that is, of moral and physical good, belonging to God; the other of Darkness, that is, of evil, belonging to Satan and the bad angels who seek to destroy the work of God. According to their teaching, man's spirit is from God and is good; his body is from Satan and is evil. Hence, man is constantly drawn in opposite directions by these two antagonistic forces, and he can triumph over the powers of darkness only by austere asceticism. To the Manichaeans, Christ was a divine Being who appeared on earth, but not in a human body. In the fourth century the sect spread westward, especially to Northern Africa, where many of the educated classes embraced its tenets. St. Augustine was among those who were drawn by the Manichaean boast that they could explain all mysteries. However, close association with the leaders of the sect over a period of nine years convinced him of the emptiness of their boast. After his conversion St. Augustine wrote at least forty books in refutation of their doctrines. Cf. Mourret-Thompson, *History of the Catholic Church* (St. Louis 1931) 441-443.

of a woman. They delete completely from their belief, or, rather, from their unbelief, the fact that 'the Word was made flesh.'[3] The entire provision for our salvation, namely, the fact that God who had made man became Man for the purpose of finding man, the entire plan by which Christ poured out His real, not pretended, blood for the remission of our sins and with His own blood wiped out the handwriting of our sins—all this accursed heretics tried to make void. All that appeared to the eyes of men, as the Manichaeans believe, was spirit, not flesh.

(2) Behold, the Gospel speaks to us! The Lord was standing among His disciples who did not yet believe that He had risen. They saw Him and they thought that they saw a spirit. If there is no harm in believing that Christ was a spirit, not flesh, I repeat, if there is no harm in that belief, let the disciples be dismissed holding to that belief. Pay attention now, so that you may grasp what I wish to say. May God grant that I may speak, or, rather, may He grant that I may so speak as it is expedient for you to hear. Listen, I resume my argument. Sometimes those detestable persons who denounce the flesh, yet live according to the flesh, deceive others by making this statement: 'Who hold a better belief concerning Christ: those who say that He had a body or we who say that He was God, that He was a spirit, and that, not a body, but God appeared to the eyes of men? What is better, flesh or spirit?' What are we going to answer except that spirit is better than flesh? 'Therefore,' they say, 'if you admit that spirit is better than flesh, we, who say that Christ was spirit, have a better belief concerning Him.' O accursed error! Why? Do I say that Christ is flesh? You say that He is spirit; I say that He is spirit and flesh. You express, not a better, but a briefer, belief. Therefore, hear the whole doctrine which I assert, that is, which the Catholic faith asserts, which the most firmly grounded and serene Truth asserts. You, who say that Christ was only a spirit, declare that Christ was only

3 John 1.14.

that which our spirit is, that is, a soul. Now, listen to what you say. I am setting forth merely what you say: He was a spirit of that same nature and substance as our spirit is. Notice how much less you say than we: He was the Word, and He was flesh. You say He was only a human spirit. I say that He was the Word, spirit, body; God and Man. If I do not wish to make two statements, if I do not wish to say two things, I use the shorter expression, 'He was God and Man; true God and true Man. There was nothing false in His humanity; there was nothing false in His divinity.' But, if you ask me about Him as Man, I repeat the twofold answer: 'He had a human soul and a human body. You are a man because of your soul and body; He was Christ because He was God and Man.' That, then, is my statement.

You, however, think that you make a superior statement because you say that He was a spirit, that a spirit appeared, that a spirit was seen, and that a spirit engaged in conversation. You say this, and, as I said before, the disciples thought this. If you are saying nothing wrong, if what you say is good, then what the disciples thought was good, also. If the Lord left them in such a way that they continued to think this, then you, too, ought to be dismissed. For the disciples believed what you also believe. If what you believe is good, then what they believed was good. But it was not good.

(3) The Lord said to them: 'Why are you disturbed?' In their confusion, they believed what you believe. What was that? They 'thought that they saw a spirit.' And the Lord, in answer to their doubts, said: 'Why are you disturbed, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?' Those doubts are earth-born, for, if they were heaven-sent, they would descend, not rise, to their hearts. As a matter of fact, why are we told to lift up our hearts unless it be so that our hearts, which we have directed heavenward, may not find thoughts of earth before them? Therefore, 'Why are you disturbed, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See my hands and feet, that it is I myself. Feel me and see.' If it is not enough for you

to see, then put in your hand. If it is not enough for you to observe, then, feel. He not only said 'Touch,' but 'Feel and handle.' Let your own hands prove it if your eyes deceive. 'Feel me and see.' Have eyes in your hands. Why does He say: 'Feel and see'? Because 'a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.'[4]

You, as well as the disciples, have made a mistake; now be corrected along with the disciples. I grant that it is human to err. You think Christ is a spirit. Peter, too, thought this, and the others who thought they saw a spirit. But they did not remain in their mistake, although you know for a fact that this false idea had been in their minds. The Physician did not leave them in this state. He approached; He applied a remedy; He saw the wounds in their hearts; He bore in His own body the scars with which their wounds would be healed.

(5) Thus, then, let us believe. I know that you do believe, but lest, perhaps, there should be weeds in the garden of the Lord, I address even those whom I do not see. Let no one believe anything about Christ other than what Christ Himself wished to be believed about Himself. In His presence it is certainly fitting for us to believe what He wished to be believed about Himself, since He redeemed us, since He sought our salvation, since He poured out His blood for us, since for our sake He endured what He had not merited, and since He brought to us what we had not merited. Let us believe this. What is Christ? The Son of God, the Word of God. What is the Word of God? The Word of God is that which cannot be uttered by the word of man. You ask me what the Word of God is!

If I should attempt to tell you what the word of man is, I fail to make it clear, I become weary, I stammer, I give up, I am unable to explain the power of the human word. Behold, before I say to you what I wish to say, the word is already in my mind. It has not yet been voiced by me, and

4 Cf. Luke 24.37-40.

it is with me. It is expressed by me and it comes to you without leaving me. You listen so that you may hear words from me. I feed your minds when I speak. If I were to bring you food for your stomachs, you would divide it among you and no individual would get the entire amount. Furthermore, in proportion as you are more numerous, you would divide what I set before you into more parts; each one would receive a smaller portion according as the number of those receiving would be increased. Now, however, I have brought you food for your minds with the words: 'Take, receive, eat.' You have taken, eaten, and yet you have not divided it. Whatever I say is intended as a whole for all and for each individual. Behold how it is not possible to give a satisfactory explanation of the power which the human word possesses! Yet you say to me: 'What is the Word of God?'

The Word of God feeds many thousands of angels. They are nourished in mind; they are filled in mind. He fills the angels; He fills the world; He fills the Virgin's womb, He is neither spread out in the world, nor confined in the womb. What is the Word of God? Let Him Himself tell us; He says but little concerning Himself, but what He says means much: 'I and the Father are one.'[5] Do not count the words; weigh them. Why so? A plurality of words does not help in explaining the one Word. 'The Word,' which cannot be explained, 'was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'[6] He assumed the whole, as it were, the complete man, the soul and the body of man. And if you wish to hear something more minutely detailed, because beasts also have a soul and a body, when I say that He assumed a human soul and a human body, I mean that He assumed a complete human soul. For there have been persons who have fashioned a heresy from this fact, saying that the soul of Christ did not have a mind, that it did not have understanding, that it did not have reason, but that on the contrary, the Word of God

5 John 10.30.
6 John 1.14.

served as mind for Christ, as intellect and as reason for Him.[7] I do not want you to believe this. He who created the whole man and redeemed the whole man assumed the whole man and thus freed the whole man. In Him is the mind and intellect of man; in Him is a soul giving life to the body; in Him is flesh, true and entire; sin alone is not in Him.

Sermon 238

On Luke 24.38-47

(1) Thus, the reading of the holy and enduring Gospel shows us the true Christ and the true Church, to save us from making a mistake in regard to either, by giving another bride to the sacred Spouse instead of His own or by bringing to the holy Church another consort in the place of her own. Therefore, to prevent any such error, let us hear, as it were, their matrimonial record as given in the Gospel.

(2) In regard to the Lord Christ, there have not been lacking, and in fact there are not lacking now, persons who are so deceived that they believe that He did not have a true body. Let them hear what we have just heard. He is in heaven, but His voice is audible here; He sits at the right hand of the Father, but He speaks here in our midst. Let Him reveal Himself; let Him manifest Himself. What need is there of seeking any other witness concerning Him? Rather, let us listen to Him. He appeared to His disciples and suddenly stood in their midst. (You were listening when that was read aloud.) They, however, were disturbed; they 'thought that they saw a spirit.'[1] That is what is thought by those who do not believe that He had a true body; these are the Manichaeans,[2] the Priscillianists,[3] and other scourges

1 Luke 24.37.
2 See Sermon 237 note 2.
3 The Priscillianists were adherents of a heresy introduced into Spain
7 See Sermon 244 note 13.

not worthy to be mentioned. As a matter of fact, they do not think that Christ is nothing; they do not hold that; but they think that He is a spirit, that He had no body.

What do you think, O Catholic? What do you think, O faithful spouse? What can you think except what you have learned from Him? For you have not been able to find a better witness concerning Him than Himself. What, then, do you say? You have learned that Christ is the Word, and that He has a human body and soul. What have you learned about the Word? 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God.'[4] What have you learned about His human soul? 'And bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.'[5] What have you learned about His human body? Just listen. Forgive those who think what the disciples in their confusion previously thought. The disciples, however, did not remain in their error. They thought, as the Manichaeans and as the Priscillianists think today, that the Lord Christ was only a spirit without a true body. Let us see whether the Lord allowed them to remain in this error. See how pernicious is the mistake which the Physician, reluctant to have it grow stronger, hastened to heal. They thought that they saw a spirit. He, who knew how dangerous those thoughts were, endeavored to root them out of their hearts, saying: 'Why are you dis-

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toward the end of the fourth century by an Egyptian named Marcus and fostered by a distinguished Spaniard, Priscillian. A letter of Pope Leo the Great (*Epistula* 15, *PL* 54.680) reveals that its chief tenets were: belief in two kingdoms of Light (Spirit) and Darkness (Matter); the theory of the imprisonment of the spirit in flesh and its redemption by a pseudo-incarnation of a higher being; and the heretical view that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one and the same Person, spoken of under three names but not consisting of three Persons. The doctrines and practices of the Priscillianists were examined in the Synod of Saragossa in 380, and Priscillian and his followers were excommunicated. Violent attempts to extirpate the heresy by putting the leaders to death only served to augment it. However, it gradually died out before the end of the sixth century. Cf. M. L. Cozens, *Handbook of Heresies* (London 1928) 101.

4 Cf. John 1.1-3.

5 John 19.30.

turbed, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet . . . Touch me and see that a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.'[6] Hold on to what you have learned; hold on against all the foolish opinions of all men; otherwise, you are lost. Christ is the true Word, the Only-begotten, equal to the Father; He has a true human soul and a true human body without sin. This body died and rose again; it hung upon a cross, it lay in a tomb; it now dwells in heaven. The Lord Christ wished to convince His disciples that what they saw was really bones and flesh; but you deny that. Does He lie, then, and do you tell the truth? Do you build up one's belief while He deceives? Why did Christ wish to convince me of this unless He knew that belief is advantageous to me and that unbelief harms me? Therefore, believe. He is our Spouse.

(3) Let us now hear about His Spouse, also, because some persons, favoring adulterers, are again trying to displace the true spouse and to substitute a false one. Let us hear about His Spouse. When, therefore, they had touched His feet, hands, flesh, and bones, the Lord went on to say: 'Have you anything here to eat?'[7] so that His true humanity might be proved by His sharing their food. He accepted what they offered; He ate and gave to them. And when they were still trembling with joy, He said: 'Are not these the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you?' Why did He not say merely 'While I was with you'? Why does He say: 'While I was yet with you,' that is, 'while I was still mortal as you are? Why did I say to you then that "all things must be fulfilled that are written in the Law, and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning me" '? Then He opened their minds, that they might understand the Scriptures. And He said to them that thus Christ should suffer, and should rise again from the dead on the third day. Take away the true body and there will be no true Passion; there will be no true

6 Cf. Luke 24.38-40.
7 Luke 24.41.

Resurrection. Behold, you have your Spouse: 'Thus the Christ should suffer, and should rise again from the dead on the third day.' Hold fast to your Head; hear about the Body.

Now, in truth, what should I point out to you? Let us, who have heard about the Spouse, understand about His bride. [The narrative continues:] 'And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.' Where? When? How far? 'To all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.'[8] Behold, now you have the bride. Let no one commend mere fables to you; let no frenzy of heretics bark at you from corners. The Church is spread throughout the whole world; all nations possess the Church. Let no one deceive you; the Church is true, it is Catholic. We did not see Christ, but we do see His Church; let us believe about Him. The Apostles, on the contrary, saw Him; they believed concerning the Church. They saw one thing; in addition, they believed another. On the other hand, we see one thing; let us also believe the other. They saw Christ and they believed in the Church which they did not see. We see the Church; let us believe in Christ whom we do not see. Holding fast to what we see, we shall come to Him whom we do not yet see. Thus, knowing about the Spouse and His bride, let us gain more knowledge about them in their marriage records, that we may not stir up trouble in such a holy marriage.

8 See Luke 24.44-47. St. Augustine has combined his own words with those of Scripture in the above quotations.

Sermon 239

On the Resurrection of Christ according to St. Mark and St. Luke

(1) Today we have heard the account of the Resurrection of our Lord for the third time from the Gospel. As you remember, I told you that it is the custom to read aloud the account of the Resurrection from all the Evangelists. It is the Gospel of Mark which we heard just now. Mark merited that arrangement, in spite of the fact that, like Luke, he was not one of the twelve Apostles. For, although there are four Evangelists, Matthew, John, Mark, and Luke, only two of them, Matthew and John, belong to the Twelve. But their precedence was fertile in that they produced quite suitable companions. Mark and Luke were not equal to the Apostles, but they were nearly so. For the Holy Spirit willed to choose for the writing of the Gospel two who were not even from those who made up the Twelve, so that it might not be thought that the grace of evangelization had come only to the Apostles and that in them the fountain of grace had dried up. As a matter of fact, since the Lord had said of him who had worthily received and had kept His spirit and His word: 'It shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up unto life everlasting,'[1] the fountain reveals itself, especially by flowing, not by standing still. So, through the Apostles, grace came to others and they were sent to preach the Gospel. Inasmuch as He who called the first called the second, also, He has continued right down to most recent times to call the Body of His only-begotten Son, that is, the Church spread throughout the whole world.

(2) What, then, did we hear Mark say? That the Lord appeared to two disciples on the road, as Luke whose Gospel we heard yesterday also related. Mark's words are: 'He was

1 Cf. John 4.14.

manifested in another form to two of them.'[2] Luke, however, said this in other words, though without deviating from the fact. What was it Luke said? 'Their eyes were held, that they should not recognize him.'[3] But what did Mark say? 'He was manifested to them in another form.'[4] When Luke said: 'Their eyes were held, that they should not recognize him,' he implied Mark's statement, 'in another form.' For, if their eyes were not open, but held, then another form was seen. Therefore, my brethren, although Luke said what I believe you remember quite well from yesterday's reading, that their eyes were opened when He blessed and broke the bread, why do we conclude that, because their eyes were opened then, they had walked along the road in His company with their eyes closed? Furthermore, how were they able to direct their steps if their eyes were closed? Therefore, their eyes were opened to knowledge, not to vision. And thus, our Lord Jesus Christ, unrecognized before the breaking of bread, speaks with men; He is recognized in the breaking of bread because He is perceived there where eternal life is gained. Hospitality is offered on earth to Him who prepares for us a place in heaven, for in the Gospel of John He says: 'In my Father's house there are many mansions. Were it not so, I should have told you, because I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again, and I will take you to myself.'[5] The Lord of heaven willed to be a Sojourner on earth; He, by whom the world was made, willed to be a Wayfarer in the world; He deigned to be a Guest that you might obtain a blessing by receiving Him. When He entered the house as a Guest, it was not because He was in need of shelter.

(3) In time of famine, the Lord fed holy Elias by means of a crow; birds served him whom men were persecuting.

2 Mark 16.12.
3 Luke 24.16.
4 Cf. Mark 16.12.
5 John 14.2-4.

Each morning a crow brought bread to the servant of God and flesh in the evening. Hence, he whom God fed through the ministry of birds was not in need. Nevertheless, although Elias was not in need, he was sent to the widow in Sarepta, and he was given this direction: 'Go to that widow; she will feed thee.' Had God failed, that Elias was sent to the widow? Quite the contrary, but, if God always furnished bread to His servant without human ministration, how would the widow get any reward? Therefore, he who is not in need is sent to one who is in need; he who is not hungry, to one who is hungry; and he says to her: 'Go, bring me a morsel of bread that I may eat.' She had only a small portion which she was about to eat and then die. She answered and told the Prophet how much she had; he replied: 'Go, and give it to me first.' Without hesitation, she brought it. He obtained refreshment; she merited a blessing. Holy Elias blessed the pot of meal and the cruse of oil; that meal had been set out in the house to be consumed, and the oil cruse hung on the post ready to be used up. The blessing was given, and those receptacles became treasures; the little cruse became a fountain of oil and the handful of meal surpassed the richest harvests. [6]

(4) If Elias needed nothing, did Christ need anything? My brethren, the Scriptures admonish us for this very reason: God frequently brings need upon His servants, whom He is able to feed, so that He may find devoted souls. Let no one be proud because he gives to the poor; Christ was poor. Let no one be proud because he receives a wayfarer: Christ was a Wayfarer. The One received is better than the one who offers hospitality; the One who accepts is richer than he who gives. He who received possessed all things; he who gave gave to Him from whom he had received what he gave. Let no one, then, be proud when he gives to the poor, my brethren. Let him not say in his mind: 'I give, he accepts; I receive him, he needs shelter.' Perhaps he is superior to

6 Cf. 3 Kings 17.9-17.

you in some respect in which you are lacking. Perhaps he whom you receive is just; he lacks bread, but you lack truth; he lacks a roof, but you lack heaven; he lacks money, but you lack justice.

Be a money-lender; pay out what you receive. Do not be afraid that God will judge you if you are a money-lender. By all means, by all means, be a money-lender. But God says to you: 'What do you wish?' Do you wish to exact usury? What does 'to exact usury' mean? To give less and receive more. Then God says to you: 'Behold, give to me; I receive less and I give more. What do I say? Yes, I give a hundred-fold and life everlasting.' He to whom you seek to give your money so that it may increase, the man whom you thus seek, rejoices when he gets the money and weeps when he returns it; he begs to get the money, but he calumniates you to avoid repaying it. Yes, indeed, give to the man and do not turn away from him who seeks a loan.[7] But take only so much as you have given. Let him to whom you have given not weep; otherwise, you have spoiled an act of kindness. And if what you gave and what he received is due and he, perhaps, does not have it at hand, just as you gave it to him when he asked for it, so now wait since he does not have it; he will pay you when he does have it. Do not make new troubles for him whose burdens you once lightened. Behold, you have given money, and now you are demanding it; but he does not have it to give to you. He will pay you when he does have it. Do not shout and say: 'Am I asking for a loan? I am seeking only what I gave; what I have given, that I will get back.' You are right; but he does not have the money. You are not a money-lender, yet you wish him to whom you furnished the money to have recourse to a money-lender in order to pay you. If you are not making your demand because of the interest, so that he may not suffer you as a money-lender, why do you wish him to put up with another money-lender because of you? You are putting pressure on him,

7 Cf. Matt. 5.42.

you are tightening your hold on him even though you are demanding only what you gave. Moreover, by stifling him and by making difficulties for him, you have not bestowed a kindness but, instead, you have brought much distress upon him. Perhaps, you may say: 'He has the wherewith to pay. He has a home; let him sell it. He has possessions; let him sell them.' When he sought help from you, he did so in order not to sell; let him not, because of your importunity, do that which you helped him to avoid. God orders and God wills that this attitude be taken toward all men.

(5) But are you avaricious? God says to you: 'Be avaricious! Be just as avaricious as you can, but come to terms with Me in regard to your avarice; come to terms with Me, for I made My rich Son poor for your sake.' Truly, when Christ was rich, He became poor on account of us.[8] Do you seek for gold? He made it. Do you seek for silver? He made it. Do you seek for a household? He made it. Do you seek for flocks? He made them. Do you seek for possessions? He made them. Why do you seek only what He made? Seek Him who made all these things. Consider how He loved you: 'All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made.'[9] All things, He Himself among them, were made by Him. He who made all things was Himself made among them. He who made man was Himself made Man; He was made what He made, so that what He made might not perish. He who made all things was made among all things. Consider riches; what is richer than He by whom all things were made? Yet, although He was rich, He took mortal flesh in a virgin's womb. He was born as an Infant; He was wrapped in swaddling clothes; He was laid in a manger; He patiently waited for the normal periods of life; He, by whom all seasons were made, patiently endured the seasons. He was nursed; He cried; He appeared as an infant. He lay there, yet He was reigning; He was in the manger, yet He sustained the

8 Cf. 2 Cor. 8.9.
9 John 1.3.

world; He was nursed by His Mother and adored by the Gentiles; He was nursed by His Mother and adored by angels; He was nursed by His Mother, and announced by a gleaming star. Such riches and such poverty! Riches, that you might be created; poverty, that you might be redeemed. Therefore, the fact that He as a poor Man was granted hospitality as a poor Man was the result of the condescension of the recipient, not of the wretchedness of the needy.

(6) Oh, blessed are they who have merited to receive Christ! Oh, if only I had been there! If only I had been one of the two whom He encountered on the road! Be on the way; let not the Wayfarer Christ be in need. Do you think one is no longer permitted to offer hospitality to Christ? You say: 'How is it permitted? Having already risen, He was manifested to His disciples; He ascended into heaven; there He is at the right hand of the Father; He will not come again except to judge the living and the dead at the end of the world. Then, however, He will come in glory, not in weakness; He will bestow a kingdom instead of seeking hospitality.' And when He bestows His kingdom, will that which He is going to say be addressed to you: 'As long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me'?[10] Though rich, He is in need even unto the end of the world. Not in the Head, assuredly, does this need exist, but in His members. How is He in need? In those in whose person He suffered when He said: 'Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?'[11] Therefore, let us serve Christ. He is with us in His followers; He is with us in ourselves: not without reason did He say: 'Behold, I am with you . . . even unto the consummation of the world.'[12] By acting thus, in our good works we perceive Christ, not with the body, but with the heart; not with the eyes of the body, but with those of faith. 'Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed,'

10 Matt. 25.40.
11 Acts 9.4.
12 Matt. 28.20.

He said to a certain unbelieving disciple who had said: 'I will not believe unless I have touched him.' And the Lord bade him: 'Come, touch me, and not be unbelieving.' The disciple did so and cried out: 'My Lord and my God.' Then the Lord replied: 'Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed,'[13] as if to say: 'That is the whole extent of your faith; you believe because you see; I praise those who do not see and do believe, because when they see, they will rejoice.'

Sermon 240

On the Resurrection of the Body, against the Pagans

(1) Throughout these days, as your Charity recalls, the passages from the Gospel pertaining to the Resurrection of the Lord are solemnly read. For no one of the Evangelists could pass in silence over the Passion or the Resurrection. Inasmuch as the Lord Jesus did many things, all the Evangelists did not relate all His works—one related some things; another, other incidents—nevertheless, there is complete harmony in the truth. John the Evangelist mentions the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ did many things which have been written down by no one. Such tremendous things were done as needed to be done then; such tremendous deeds were related as need to be read now. To show that all the Evangelists said nothing contradictory on those subjects which all mention and none omit, that is, on the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, is truly a laborious undertaking; but, because some persons have thought that the Evangelists were at variance with one another since they were of different dispositions, for that reason I have secured assistance from those who, with the help of God, were able to prove that there is no lack of harmony among the Evangelists. However, as I have said, if I should make this information known to you and if I should

13 Cf. John 20.25-29.

wish to discuss this problem in public, the majority of listeners would be overwhelmed with weariness before they would grasp the knowledge of the truth. But I know your faith, that is, I know the faith of this entire assembly and of those who are not here today but who are, nevertheless, faithful; I know that the faith of these people in regard to the veracity of the Evangelists is so well grounded that they do not need my exposition. He who knows how to defend these arguments is more learned, not necessarily more faithful. He has faith and he has the ability to defend the faith. Another may not have the ability, the opportunity, or the training which fits one to defend the faith, but he has the faith itself. He who knows how to defend the faith is necessary for the wavering, not for the believers; for, in the defense of the faith the wounds of doubt or of unbelief are healed. Therefore, he who defends the faith is a good doctor; but there is no disease of unbelief among you. How can he cure a disease which you do not have? He knows how to give a remedy; but you have no sickness. 'It is not the healthy who need a physician, but they who are sick.'[1]

(2) Nevertheless, there is no point in keeping silent about matters which can be quickly discussed and conveniently heard in the time at our disposal. Many persons call into question many points about the Resurrection, of which the Lord furnished us an example in His own case so that we might know what to hope for at the end of the world in regard to our own bodies. Some do this in good faith; others, in unbelief. Those who enter the discussion in good faith wish to gain a better knowledge of how to answer the unbelievers. On the other hand, those who dispute through unbelief argue to the detriment of their own souls by opposing the power of the Omnipotent, saying: 'How is it possible for a dead person to rise again?' I answer: 'It is God who does this, and do you say that it cannot be done? I do not ask you to show me a Christian or a Jew, but to show me any

1 Matt. 9.12.

pagan, any worshiper of idols and server of demons, who does not admit that God is omnipotent. He can deny that Christ exists; he cannot deny that God is omnipotent. Therefore, as if I were speaking to this pagan, I say that the very same God whom you believe to be omnipotent is the One who raises the dead; and, if you say that it cannot be done, you detract from the Omnipotent. However, if you believe that He is omnipotent, why do you reject the statement that I make?'

(3) If I were to say that the body would rise again to be hungry and thirsty, to be sick and to suffer, to be subject to corruption, you would be right in refusing to believe me. True, the flesh now suffers these needs and afflictions. And why? Sin is the reason. We have all sinned in one man, and we have all been born unto corruption. Sin is the cause of all our evils. As a matter of fact, it is not without reason that men suffer all these evils. God is just; God is omnipotent; in no way would we suffer these evils if we did not deserve them. But, since we were committed to these punishments to which we are subject because of our sins, our Lord Jesus Christ wished to be involved in our punishments without any sin on His part. By enduring the penalty without any guilt, He cancelled both the guilt and the penalty. He cancelled the guilt by forgiving sins; the penalty, by rising from the dead. He promised this and He wished us to walk in hope; let us persevere, and we shall come to the reward. The flesh will rise incorruptible; the flesh will rise without defect, without blemish, without mortality, without burden, and without weight. What now brings pain to you will then be your glory. Therefore, if it is good to have an incorruptible body, why do we wish to despair that God will do this?

(4) The philosophers of this world who were great and learned, and superior to the rest, believed that the human soul is immortal. Not only did they hold this belief, but they supported their assertions by as many arguments as possible and they left to posterity these arguments in writing. The

books exist and are read. I said that these philosophers were better in comparison with those who were inferior, because there have been philosophers who declared that no life remained for man after his death. The former are certainly to be preferred to the latter; and, although they deviated from the truth in many respects, yet they were better in proportion as they were superior in approaching more closely ot the truth. The philosophers, therefore, who thought and declared that human souls are immortal, investigated, as far as human powers permitted, the causes for the evils of men, and for the troubles and mistakes of mortals, and they stated that, so far as they could see, some sins or other had been committed in a previous life in punishment for which the souls acquired bodies, as it were, a prison.[2] Then they raised the question as to what would take place after man died. On this problem they expended all their talents, striving as well as they could to give a reason to men, to themselves and to others, and they said that, when the unclean souls of men who had lived badly in the worst vices departed from their bodies, immediately they went into other bodies and were now paying the penalties which we observe in these bodies· They added, however, that when the souls which had lived well went forth from their bodies, they proceeded to the highest places in the heavens and there rested amid the stars and the brilliant lights and all the heavenly places of seclusion, unmindful of their past evils; but that they were happy to return again to bodies and to suffer these trials once more. The philosophers wished to point out this difference between the souls of sinners and the souls of the just: that when the souls of sinners went forth from their bodies, they were immediately placed in other bodies; but that the souls of the just remained in repose for a long time, not, however, forever, and that they again took delight in bodies, and from the heights of heaven, after so much justice, wreaked havoc upon those evils.

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2 See Plato, *Phaedrus* 215; Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* 1.53-55: *De re publica* 6.26,28-29.

(5) Truly great philosophers made that statement; the philosophers of this world could discover nothing more than that. Hence, concerning them our Scriptures say: 'Has not God turned to foolishness the "wisdom" of this world?' If the wisdom, then how much more so the foolishness? If the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the eyes of God, then how far from God is the true foolishness of the world? There is, however, a certain foolishness of this world which has led to God, concerning which the Apostle says: 'Since, in God's wisdom, the world did not come to know God by "wisdom," it pleased God, by the foolishness of our preaching, to save those who believe.' And he continues: 'For the Jews ask for signs, and the Greeks look for "wisdom"; but we, for our part, preach a crucified Christ—to the Jews indeed a stumbling-block and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.'[3]

The Lord Christ, the Wisdom of God, has come; the heavens resound; let frogs cease their croaking. That which Truth has said is true. It is clear that He said the human race is in evil straits on account of sin. But he who has believed in Him who was placed as Mediator between God and men (a just Man midway between a just God and unjust men, possessing His humanity from below and His justice from above, and, on that account, placed midway; having one nature from this region and the other from that, because if He were completely divine, He would not belong here and if He were completely human, He would lie here with us and would not be midway); he, therefore, who has believed in such a Mediator and has lived faithfully and well, will go forth from his body and will be at rest; afterwards, in truth, he will receive his body, not for torment, but for glory; and he will live with God for all eternity. There is nothing to entice him to return, because he has his body with him. Therefore, my dear brethren, since I have set

3 1 Cor. 1.20-25.

before you today what is held by the philosophers of this world whose wisdom God rejected as true foolishness, tomorrow with the help of God I shall give you my explanation.

Sermon 241

(1) The belief in the resurrection of the dead is the distinctive belief of Christians. Christ, our Head, in His own person revealed this to us, that is, the resurrection of the dead, and He furnished us an example of this belief, so that His members might have hope for themselves in regard to that which had already happened to their Head. Yesterday I informed you that wise men of the pagans whom they call philosophers, and who were outstanding among their own people, had made a thorough investigation of nature and had come to know the Creator from His works.[1] They did not hear the Prophets; they did not receive the Law of God; but God, though silent, spoke to them in a certain way through the works of this world, and the outward aspect of the world challenged them to seek its Maker; they could not be convinced that the heavens and the earth existed without a Creator. The blessed Apostle Paul speaks thus concerning these philosophers:[2] 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness.' What does 'against all ungodliness' mean? That the wrath of God is revealed from heaven not only against the Jews who received the Law and offended the Giver of the Law, but also against all the ungodliness of the pagans. And, lest anyone should say: 'Why is that, since they did not receive the Law?' he went on to add: 'and wickedness of those men who in wickedness hold back the truth.' Now you ask: 'What truth? For they did not receive the Law; they did not hear the Prophet.' Learn what truth [from the words of the Apostle]: 'Seeing that

1 See Sermon 240.
2 Rom. 1.18-21.

what may be known about God is manifest to them.' How was it manifested? Hear the answer: 'For God has manifested it to them.' If you persist in asking: 'How did He manifest it to those to whom He did not give the Law?' hear the reply: 'For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes are clearly seen . . . being understood through the things that are made.' 'For his invisible attributes,' that is, the invisible attributes of God, 'since the creation of the world,' that is, since the world was made, 'are clearly seen . . . being understood through the things that are made,' that is, those attributes, being understood through the things of creation, are clearly seen. I am giving the words of the Apostle, interweaving my own commentary: 'His everlasting power also and divinity,' you supply 'being understood, are clearly seen.' 'And so they are without excuse.' Why 'without excuse'? Because 'although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks.' He did not say 'although they did not know God' but 'although they knew God.'

(2) How did those philosophers know God? From the things which He had made. Question the beautiful earth; question the beautiful sea; question the beautiful air, diffused and spread abroad; question the beautiful heavens; question the arrangement of the constellations; question the sun brightening the day by its effulgence; question the moon, tempering by its splendor the darkness of the ensuing night; question the living creatures that move about in the water, those that remain on land, and those that flit through the air, their souls hidden but their bodies in view, visible things which are to be ruled and invisible spirits doing the ruling;—question all these things and all will answer: 'Behold and see! We are beautiful.' Their beauty is their acknowledgment. Who made these beautiful transitory things unless it be the unchanging Beauty?

Finally, these philosophers, in order to be able to understand God, the Creator of the whole world, in man himself, investigated the two parts of man: his soul and his body.

They investigated what they themselves possessed; they saw the body, they did not see the soul; but they saw the body only by means of the soul. For they saw through the eyes; but what looked out through the windows [of the eyes] was within them. Besides, when the dweller departs, the house lies empty; when that which guided withdraws, that which was guided falls; and since it falls, it is called a fallen body or a corpse. Are not those eyes unimpaired? They are wide open, but they see nothing; the ears are there, but the hearer has departed; the organ of speech remains, but the music which stirred it has gone. Therefore, the philosophers investigated these two parts of man, the body which is seen and the soul which is not seen, and they came to the conclusion that what is not seen is better than what is seen, that the invisible soul is superior and the visible body inferior. They saw these things; they considered them; they discussed both parts and they found that both parts of man were subject to change, that the body changed through the various stages of life, through the breaking down and the building up of tissues, through refreshment and wasting away, through life and through death. They turned their attention to the soul which they had recognized as undoubtedly superior and at which they marvelled even though it was invisible. They found that it, too, was subject to change, that now it wished and again it did not wish; that now it knew and again it did not know; that now it remembered and again it forgot; that now it feared and again it dared; that now it advanced toward wisdom and again it dropped back into foolishness. They saw that it, too, was subject to change; they passed on from it, also; they sought something which would not be subject to change.

(3) Thus, therefore, the philosophers came to the knowledge of God through the things which He had made. 'But they did not glorify him as God or give thanks,' says the Apostle, 'but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless minds have been darkened. For while professing to

be wise, they have become fools.' By arrogating to themselves what they had received, they lost what they possessed. Professing to be, as it were, great men, they became as fools. And what did they come to? The Apostle goes on: 'They have changed the glory of the incorruptible God for an image made like to corruptible man.' He refers to idols. And it was not enough to make an image like to man and to abandon the Maker for the likeness of His work; that was not enough. What else did they make? Images like to 'birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.'[3] They, as it were, great wise men, made all those dumb beasts and irrational objects as gods for themselves. I censured you when you adored the image of a man. What shall I do when you adore the image of a dog, the image of a serpent, the image of a crocodile? They descended even to those depths. Falling just as low as they had been carried aloft in their investigations, they were sunk in the depths, for the greater the height from which an object falls, the more deeply is it submerged.

(4) Therefore, as I impressed upon you yesterday, these philosophers then investigated what came after this life. They conducted their inquiry as mere men; but how would they find out anything, since they were but mere men? They did not have the revelation of God; they did not hear the Prophets; they were not capable of finding out; they simply conjectured. I put their opinions before you yesterday. 'Wicked souls go forth,' they say, 'and, because they are unclean, they are placed immediately in other bodies; the souls of the wise and just go forth, and, because they have lived well, they ascend to the heavens.' Well, well! You have found a good place for them! Winging their way upward, they come to the heavens! And what then? 'There they will be,' they say, 'and they will rest with the gods; the stars will be their abode.' You have found a fairly good dwelling place for them; if you wish, leave them there; do not cast them down from it. 'But,' they say, 'after long ages, when their

3 Rom. 1.21-23.

former miseries have been completely forgotten, they experience a longing to return into bodies. Then it will give them pleasure to return, to come again to suffer and to endure those evils, to forget and to blaspheme God, to pursue the pleasures of the body and to fight against its lusts.' How and for what purpose do they come back to those miseries? Tell me, why do they return? Because they forget them. But, if they forget all the evils, let them also forget the carnal delight. From their former evil state, do they remember only that which caused them to fall? They return. Why? Because it gives them pleasure to live again in their bodies. How does this pleasure arise unless through the memory that they once dwelt in the body? Destroy the memory completely and, perhaps, you will retain wisdom alone. Let nothing remain which may recall the past.

(5) This doctrine was repugnant to one of the pagan authors to whom it was disclosed and who even represented a father teaching it to his son. Almost all of you know the reference; would that it were only a few of you! Nevertheless, some of you know from books, and many of you from the theatre, that Aeneas descended to the lower regions, and that his father pointed out the souls destined to take up their abode in the bodies of mighty Romans. Aeneas himself trembled and said: 'O my father, must we consider that some great souls go hence to heaven and return again to sluggish bodies?' He says, in other words, 'Must we believe that they go to heaven and return again?' Vergil continues: 'What mad desire for life do these wretches have?'[4] The son's understanding penetrated more deeply than did the father's explanation. Aeneas censured the desire of souls that longed to return again into bodies. He called it an insane desire; he called such souls wretched; he had no respect for them. And, O philosophers, you have come to this conclusion, namely, souls are purged; that they come to the utmost purity; that through that very purity, they forget all things; and, through the forgetfulness of miseries, they return to the

4 Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.719-721. See also, St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 14.5.

miseries of the body. Tell me, I beg you, even if these things were true, would it not be better not to know them? Even if they were true, I say (although without a doubt they are false because they are foul), would it not be better to be ignorant of them?

Perhaps you will say to me: 'You will not be wise if you are ignorant of these teachings.' What will be the point of my knowing them? Can I be better now than I shall be in heaven? If in heaven, when I shall be better and more perfect, I shall forget all that I have learned here, and if I, though better, will not know these things there, permit me to be ignorant of them now. You say that the one who dwells in heaven forgets all things; permit me to be ignorant of all these things on earth. Besides, I ask you, do the souls in heaven know that they are going to suffer again the miseries of this life, or do they not? Choose whichever alternative you wish. If they know that they are going to suffer such great miseries, how are they happy when thinking about their impending sufferings? How are they happy when they are without security? I see, however, what you are choosing; you are going to say: 'They do not know.' Therefore, you praise a state of ignorance there which you do not permit me to enjoy now, by teaching me on earth what you say I shall not know in heaven. You say: 'They do not know.' If they do not know and if they do not realize that they are going to suffer, then they are happy by mistake, for they think that they are not going to suffer what they are going to suffer. What else is to make a mistake than to think falsely? So, they will be happy by mistake; they will be blessed, not because of eternity, but because of a false impression. May truth free us so that we may be really happy, since the word of our Redeemer is not meaningless: 'If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.' For He had just said: 'If you that souls are purged; that they come to the utmost purity; abide in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed, and

you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'[5]

(6) Now hear something worse, something more deplorable, or, rather, something more ridiculous. You who are a philosopher here, that is, on this earth (for the sake of a name, I mention Pythagoras, Plato, Porphyry or some other of the philosophers), why do you philosophize? He answers: 'Because of the happy life.' And when will you possess that happy life? He replies: 'When I shall have abandoned this body on earth.' Therefore, one lives a wretched life now, but there is hope of a happy life; there one lives a happy life but there is hope of a wretched one. Hence, the hope of our unhappiness is happy; but the hope of our happiness is unhappy. Let us cast aside these ideas; let us even laugh at them because they are false; or let us grieve because they are considered great. For those, my brethren, are the great ravings of great teachers. How much better it is to hold to the great sacraments of the great saints? These philosophers say that, from love of their bodies, souls that are cleansed, purified, and wise return to bodies. Is it true, then, that a purified soul loves in this fashion? Is not such a love really something sordid?

(7) But every kind of body must be avoided. Porphyry, a later but important member of that group of philosophers, one who lived in the Christian era, was a bitter enemy of the Christian faith. Although through shame he abjured his mad ravings to a certain extent, yet when censured by the Christians, he said and wrote:[6] 'Every kind of body must be avoided.' He said 'every kind of body' as if every body were a wretched prison of the soul. And certainly, if we must escape from every kind of body, there is no opportunity for one to praise that body to him and to say that, according to the teaching of God, our faith praises the body, because, although we draw punishment for sin from the body which we now possess, and although 'the corruptible body is a load

5 John 8.36,31-33.

6 See St. Augustine, *op. cit.* 12.20; 22.26.

upon the soul,'[7] nevertheless, the body has its own beauty, its own arrangement of members, its differentiation of senses, its erect posture, and other qualities which evoke the admiration of those considering it. Furthermore, it is destined to be completely incorruptible, completely immortal, completely agile and quick in movement.

Porphyry, however, says: 'You praise the body to me without good reason. No matter what kind of body it is, you must escape from it if you wish to be happy.' Philosophers say this, but they are wrong; they are raving. As I do not desire a long discussion, I shall give my proof quickly, namely, what is predicated must have a subject, for subject and predicate are two things which are intimately connected. God surpasses all things; all things are subject to Him. The soul, too, if it has any honor in the eyes of God, ought to have something subject to it. But I am reluctant to prolong this discussion. I read your books wherein you say that the world is animated, that is, that the heavens, the earth, the seas, all the huge bodies which exist, all the immense elements of all times, this whole universal body which consists of all these elements—all this, you say, is a vast living thing and has its own soul; but you claim that it does not have the senses of the body because outside of it there is nothing which can be perceived; that, nevertheless, it has intelligence; that it cleaves to God; and that the soul of the world is called Jupiter or Hecate, that is, as if it were a universal soul ruling the world and with it constituting but one living thing. You claim that this same world is eternal, that it will always exist, that it will not have an end. If, then, the world is eternal, and remains without an end; if this world is a living thing and if its soul is always held in the world, then, as a matter of fact, must we flee every kind of body? What is that which you said: 'Every kind of body must be avoided'? I say that blessed souls will always dwell in incorruptible bodies. Destroy the world, you who say that every kind of body must be

7 Wisd. 9.15.

avoided. You say that I shall flee from my body. Let your Jupiter flee from heaven and earth.

(8) What of the fact that we find the same Plato, the teacher of all those philosophers, in a certain book which he wrote on the foundation of the world, introducing God as the Maker of the gods, creating the heavenly deities, all the stars, the sun, and the moon? He says, then, that God is the Creator of the heavenly deities; he says that the stars themselves have intellectual souls which know God and visible bodies which are perceived. So that you may understand, I agree that the sun which you see would not be seen if it had no body. That is true. Neither would any star or the moon be seen if they had no body. Thus far, Plato is right. The Apostle Paul also says: 'There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies,' and he continues: 'but of one kind is the glory of the heavenly, of another kind is the glory of the earthly.' And again, speaking of the glory of the heavenly bodies, the Apostle adds: 'There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also with the resurrection of the dead.'[8] You see, glory was promised to the bodies of the saints and different degrees of glory because the merits of charity are different. But what do these philosophers say? 'Those stars which you see are, indeed, corporeal, but they have intellectual souls, and they are gods.' Meanwhile, so far as the bodies are concerned, they tell the truth, for the stars are corporeal; but as to whether or not the stars have souls, why should I say anything?

Now, let us come to the subject at hand. God is represented by Plato himself as addressing the gods which He made of corporeal and incorporeal substance and as saying to them: 'Since you have come into being, you cannot be immortal and indestructible.' At once they began to tremble. Why? Because they desired to be immortal and they did not wish to die. Therefore, in order to relieve them of their fear, He

8 1 Cor. 15.40; 41-43.

went on to make this statement: 'Nevertheless, you will not be destroyed nor will any fate of death annihilate you or prevail over My plan because your link with everlasting life is stronger than those links by which you are held together.'[9] Behold, God gives security to the gods made by Him; He gives them the security of immortality; He gives them security because they are not to abandon the substance of their bodies. Must we, then, really flee every kind of body? I think I have answered their arguments in as great detail as you are able to understand and as I am able to give to them; I have replied to them as conclusively as the time of this sermon permits and as your capacity allows. Moreover, there is still much to be said to you today in regard to what they say about the resurrection of the body so skillfully, as they think, that I cannot answer them. But because I once promised you that, throughout these days, the problem of the resurrection would be discussed, prepare your ears and minds for those points which remain to be treated, with God's help, tomorrow.

Sermon 242

(1) On these days consecrated to the Resurrection of the Lord, I shall discuss the resurrection of the body to the best of my ability, with His assistance. For this is our belief: this gift was promised to us in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ; and He has furnished an example in Himself, for He wished not only to foretell but also to show us what He promised for us at the end of the world. Those, indeed, who were with Him at that time, saw; and when they feared and believed that they saw a spirit, they felt the solidity of His body. For, not only did He speak by way of words for their ears, but also by actual appearance for their eyes; it was not enough to offer Himself to be seen, He had to

9 See Plato, *Timaeus* 41b.; also, St. Augustine, *op. cit.* 22.26.

present Himself to be handled and touched. For He said:[1] 'Why are you disturbed, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?' In fact, they thought they saw a spirit. 'Why are you disturbed, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?' He said. 'See my hands and feet. . . . Feel me and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.' And men argue against that evidence! For, in view of the fact that men know only the things that are of men, what else would they do except dispute about God in opposition to God? For He is God; they are men. God, however, 'knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are vain.'[2] In carnal man the habit of perception is the sole guide of understanding; what they are accustomed to see, that they believe; what they are not accustomed to see, that they do not believe. On account of that habit, God works miracles because He is God. Indeed, there are greater miracles in the fact that so many men are born each day who did not exist before than in the fact that a few who did exist have risen again, yet those miracles have not been grasped by consideration, but have been underestimated by reason of their repetition. Christ has risen; that is an absolute fact. He had a body; He had flesh; He hung upon a tree; He breathed forth His soul; His body was placed in a tomb. He, who dwelt in that body, later showed it alive again. Why do we wonder? Why do we not believe? It is God who has done this; consider the Doer and cast aside your doubt.

(2) Therefore, men ask whether the corruption of the body which they perceive in their own flesh will exist in the resurrection of the dead. I answer that it will not. Then they inquire: 'If corruption is not going to exist, then why will food be taken? Or, if food will not be consumed, why did the Lord eat after His Resurrection?' Just now, when the Gospel was read, we heard that, when the Lord presented Himself alive to the eyes and hands of His disciples, mere

1 Luke 24.38-41.
2 Ps. 93.11.

appearance seemed to Him insufficient to furnish evidence of His corporeality, so in addition, 'he said, "Have you anything here to eat?" And they offered him a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb; and he ate and gave them what was left.'[3] Then we are asked: 'If the corruption of the body will not remain in the resurrection, why did the Lord Christ eat?' You have read the statement that He ate; did you read that He was hungry? The fact that He ate was a manifestation of power, not of need. If He should desire to eat, He would be in need of food. Again, if He were not able to eat, He would be lacking in power. Did not the angels eat when they were given hospitality by our fathers?[4] Yet, they were not corruptible, were they?

Again, these persons say: 'Will the defects which were in the human body when man died exist in the resurrection?' I answer: 'No, these defects will not exist.' Then they ask: 'Why, then, did the Lord arise bearing the scars of His wounds?' What reply am I going to give except that this was a mark of His power, not of necessity? He willed to rise in this state; He willed thus to present Himself to certain persons who were doubting. The scars of the wounds in His flesh healed the wound of unbelief.

(3) Still they continue to argue and to ask: 'Will those who die as children rise again as children? Or will the age of those who are restored to life be complete, even though it was slight at the time of death?' This, indeed, we do not find set forth in Scripture. It has been promised that the bodies will rise incorruptible and immortal, but [no statement has been made as to] whether a brief span of life is restored, whether small stature is renewed, whether the weakness consequent upon early age is resumed, or whether, if they are small, they will just lie there, unable to walk. Nevertheless, it is accepted as more credible, more probable, and more reasonable that the privilege will be granted to

3 Cf. Luke 24.41-44.
4 Cf. Gen. 18.1-9; Tob. 12.19.

souls to rise again at the fullness of the age which had been destined for them in time. We certainly do not believe that breathless and bent old age will be restored. In a word, remove the possibility of corruption and add what you choose.

But, you now ask how an earthly body will exist in heaven. Those philosophers of the pagans, those very great men whose theories I described as foolish or at least merely human (for they made their investigations, not under the guidance of the Spirit of God, but by mere human conjecture), they, in particular, propose this problem. They treat very minutely the significance of the weight and of the order of the elements; and they say, what we also see, that the world has been so adjusted that the lowest layers of earth constitute, so to speak, its foundation; that water is then superimposed on the earth; that air comes next, in third place; and that the upper air, as the fourth element, covers all things. They state that this upper element, which they call upper air, is pure liquid fire, out of which the stars are formed and in which nothing earthy can exist because the order of weights does not allow it. Were we to say to them that our bodies are going to survive in a new land, not in heaven, we would speak boldly and rashly, if not against faith, for we ought to believe that we shall inhabit bodies of such sort that we shall be wherever we wish, whenever we wish. On the other hand, if, in order to solve this problem about the order of weights, we answer that we are going to live on earth, then we are confronted with the question about the body of the Lord with which He ascended into heaven.

(4) You have heard the portion of the Gospel which recently sounded in our ears: 'And he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass as he blessed them, that he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.'[5] Who was carried up into heaven? The Lord Christ. What Lord Christ? The Lord Jesus Christ. How is that? Are you going to separate His humanity from His divinity, and are

5 Luke 24.50-53.

you going to make one person of His humanity and another of His divinity so that there is no longer a Triune God but a fourfold Deity? Just as you, a man, consist of soul and body, so the Lord Christ, the Word, had a soul and body. But the Word did not depart from the Father; He came to us without leaving the Father; He assumed flesh in the womb and yet ruled the world. What, then, was taken up into heaven except what he had taken from earth, that is, the flesh, the body concerning which He had said to His disciples: 'Feel me and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have'? Let us believe this, my brethren, and, if we find it difficult to answer all the arguments of the philosophers, let us hold, without any difficulty of belief, to that which has been manifested in the Lord. Let them chatter away; let us believe.

(5) But they say it is not possible for an earthy body to be in heaven. What if God wished this? Make answer against God and say: 'God cannot do that.' Do you and every pagan not say that God is omnipotent? Is it not written in the work of Plato, to which I referred yesterday,[6] that God uncreated said to the gods which He had made: 'Since you have come into being, you cannot be immortal and indestructible; however, you will not be destroyed nor will any fate of death annihilate you or prevail over My plan, because your link with everlasting life is stronger than those links by which you are held together'?[7] God, who is able to do even what is impossible, has subdued everything to His will. For, what other significance do the words, 'You cannot be immortal, but I shall bring it to pass that you will not die,' have except 'I am going to do what cannot be done'?

(6) Nevertheless, I wish to say something about this diversity of weights. I ask you, tell me this: Earth is earth; water is water; air is air; the upper air, that is, heaven, is heaven or pure liquid fire. Obviously, those four elements

6 See Sermon 241 note 9.
7 See Plato, *Timaeus* 41b.

have gradually made and built up the world, that is, the world was made from these four elements. Seek what is at the very lowest part, it is earth; what is above that is water; what is above the water is air; what is above the air is heaven, the upper air. Now, what are solid bodies which are held and handled? I do not mean moist things which float and flow; I refer to bodies which can be handled. In which classification do they come? Are they to be considered as belonging to earth, to water, to air, or to the upper air? You are going to say: 'To earth.' Therefore, is wood an earthy body? Certainly it is; it is born on the earth, is nourished on the earth, grows on the earth. It can be handled; it is not fluid. Now, come back with me to that order of weights. Earth is on the bottom. Follow the order. What is above the earth? Water. Then, why does wood float on water? It is an earthy body; if you recall the order of weights, it ought to be under the water, not above it. We find water midway between earth and wood, earth being underneath, water above it, and earth again above the water, since wood is earth. You have destroyed that fine order; hold to your faith. I say, then, that earthy bodies have been found above that element which is second in the order of elements since logs float and are not submerged.

(7) Notice another substance which will make you wonder more. There are very heavy bodies, still earthy, which, as soon as they have been cast into water, sink immediately and go to the lowest depths, bodies like iron and lead. For, what is heavier than lead? Nevertheless, the hand of the artisan touches the lead, makes of it a hollow vessel, and the lead floats upon the water. Therefore, will not God give to my body what the workman gives to the lead? Then, again, where do you place water in that series? You will readily answer that water is above the earth. Why, then, are rivers suspended from the clouds before they flow on the earth?

Now, turn your thought and consideration to what I am

going to say, if with God's help I am able to do so. Which is moved more readily, which is stirred more quickly, a heavier or a lighter body? Who would not answer: 'The lighter body, for lighter bodies are moved more easily and stirred more quickly; but heavier bodies, with greater difficulty and more slowly.' You have fixed the rule with certainty; you have considered the problem with assurance; and, after all aspects have been considered, you have answered that lighter bodies are moved more readily and stirred more quickly than heavier ones. That is so, you say. Then answer this question for me. Why does the extremely light spider move so slowly, and the heavy horse run so quickly? Let me speak of men themselves. A larger body of man is heavier; a shorter body which has less weight is lighter. That is true, but only if another carries it. However, if the man carries his own body, the strong man runs while the one who is weak from languor scarcely walks. Now weigh the emaciated man and the robust man; the one, by reason of his weakness, weighs scarcely a few pounds; the other, because of the healthy condition of his body, bears much weight in his flesh. Try to lift each one; the strong man is heavy while the weak man is light. Let the comparison by lifting cease and that by walking begin. Dismiss them both; let them carry their own weight. I see the thin man scarcely moving a step; I see the strong, sturdy man running. If mortal health accomplishes this, what will immortality do?

(8) Therefore, God will grant a wondrous ease of movement, a wondrous lightness. Not without reason have those bodies been termed 'spiritual.' They have not been called 'spiritual' because they will be spirits, not bodies. As a matter of fact, those bodies which we now possess are called 'soul-infused' bodies, yet they are not souls, but bodies. Just as our bodies are now called 'soul-infused,' yet are not souls, so those bodies are called 'spiritual' without being spirits, because they will be bodies. Why, then, is it called a spiritual body, my dearly beloved, except because it will obey the

direction of the spirit? Nothing in yourself will be at variance with yourself; nothing in yourself will rebel against yourself. No longer will there be that which the Apostle laments in the passage: 'The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.'[8] No longer will the words of the same Apostle be true: 'I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.'[9] Those conflicts will not exist there; but peace, perfect peace, will be there. Wherever you will have wished to be, there you will be; but you will not depart from God. Wherever you will have wished to be, there you will be; but wherever you will have gone, you will possess your God. You will always be with Him in whom your happiness consists.

Let no one make a mistake; let no one argue against this truth; let no one insist foolishly on his own mad theory; but let us hold most tenaciously to the belief that what God has promised will come to pass. When Christ appeared and was considered a spirit, my brethren, in order to convince His disciples that He was really corporeal, He offered them an opportunity, not only to see His body with their eyes, but to touch it with their hands. Then, to support the truth of their belief in His body, He deigned to take food impelled, not by necessity, but by power. Moreover, while they were still trembling with joy, He gave them strength of heart from the sacred Scriptures and 'he said to them: "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled that are written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me." Then he opened their minds,' as the Gospel which has just been read says, 'that they might understand the Scriptures. And he said to them, "Thus it is written; and thus the Christ should suffer, and should rise again from the dead on the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from

8 Gal. 5.17.
9 Rom. 7.23.

Jerusalem.' "[10] We did not witness the Resurrection; we do witness the preaching of His Gospel. When those promises were made, their fulfillment was not foreseen. The Apostles saw Christ in person; they did not see His Church spread throughout the world. They saw the Head; they believed about the [Mystical] Body. We have our part to play; we have the grace of the distribution and of the dissemination of the Gospel; the opportunity has been granted to us for believing in the unity of our faith on the strength of indisputable evidence. They saw the Head and they believed about the Body; we see the Body, let us believe about the Head.

Sermon 243

On the Resurrection of the Lord according to John 20.17

(1) The reading of the account of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John the Evangelist was begun today. Of course you know, for I have told you, that the account of the Resurrection of the Lord is read aloud according to all four Evangelists during these days. Now, in this particular passage which we have just heard, one problem alone usually disturbs us, namely, the question as to why the Lord Jesus said to the woman who, seeking His body, had just realized that He was alive: 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father.'[1] But I have told you and you ought to remember that each of the Evangelists does not mention every incident, but that what is omitted by some is mentioned by others, not in such a way that they must be considered as being at variance with one another, if controversy be avoided and if the devotion of an intelligent

10 Luke 24.44-48.

1 John 20.17.

person prevail. For example, in the account of the Evangelist Matthew we read that, after the Lord rose again, He met two women, one of whom was Mary Magdalen, that He said: 'Hail!' to them and that 'they came up and embraced his feet and worshiped him.'[2] Certainly He had not yet ascended to His Father. Why, then, did He say to the woman in this instance: 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father'? In fact, those words seem to imply that Mary would be able to touch Him after He had ascended into heaven. But what mortal can touch Him when He is seated in heaven if he does not touch Him here on earth?

(2) That touch, moreover, signifies belief; he who believes in Christ touches Christ. For example, the woman who suffered from hemorrhage said to herself: 'If I touch but the fringe of his garment I shall be saved.'[3] In full confidence she touched Him; the health which she had anticipated followed. Then, so that we might know the real significance of touching Him, immediately the Lord said to His disciples: 'Who touched me?' They answered: 'The crowds press upon thee, and dost thou say, "Who touched me?"' And He replied: 'Someone touched me,'[4] as if to say: 'The crowd presses; but faith touches.' Hence, Mary Magdalen to whom the Lord said: 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father,' seems to represent the Church which believed in Christ when He had ascended into heaven. Behold, I ask you when did you believe; I ask the Church spread out over the whole face of the earth but represented in the passage under discussion by one woman, and the Church, with one voice, answers: 'I believed at the time when Jesus ascended to His Father.' What does 'I believed at that time' mean except 'I touched at that time'? Many earthly-minded persons believed that Christ was merely a Man; they did not discern

2 Matt. 28.9.
3 Cf. Matt. 9.21.
4 Luke 8.45,46.

the divinity which lay concealed in Him. They did not touch well because they did not believe well. Do you wish to touch well? Then discern Christ where He exists co-eternal with the Father and you have touched Him. But, if you think that He is only Man, and if you think that He is nothing more than Man, then so far as you are concerned, He has not yet ascended to the Father.

(3) The Lord Jesus presented the sight of His body to human senses so as to confirm the Resurrection of that body. By showing Himself corporeally alive after His Resurrection He wished to teach us nothing more than that we should believe in the resurrection of the dead. Therefore, since all things are to be renewed whole and entire at that time, the difficult question concerning the use of the bodily members is usually asked by those who really desire to know, and is likewise usually proposed by those who desire to argue. Now, these persons say that our body has all its members and that it is quite clear that certain members are necessary for certain works. For who does not know, who does not see that we have eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, a tongue for speaking, nostrils for smelling, teeth for eating, hands for working, feet for walking, and even those members which are called pudenda for propagating the race? Furthermore, we also have the inner organs which God wished to be hidden lest they should frighten us by their appearance, but many men and doctors, in particular, understand the ends for which our inner organs and those which are called intestines are useful. Therefore, persons argue and say to us: 'If we shall have ears to hear, eyes to see, and a tongue to speak, why, if we are not going to eat, shall we have teeth, jaws, lungs, stomach, and intestines by which food may pass and be transformed for the furthering of our health?' Finally, they say: 'Why shall we have those very members which are called pudenda in that place where there will be no generation, no digestion?'

(4) What are we going to reply to such persons? Are we to say that we shall rise without intestines after the fashion

of statues? Certainly, a ready answer can be given in regard to teeth, for they assist us, not only in eating, but also in speaking, since in the formation of syllables they strike against our tongue just as the plectrum strikes the strings of the lyre. Other members, therefore, will exist for appearance, not for use; for the furtherance of beauty, not for the satisfaction of a need. Will they necessarily be unseemly because they are without function? Indeed, because we are now ignorant and uninstructed in the causes of things, if our inner organs are disclosed to view, we experience feelings of revulsion rather than of love. For who understands how these members are interrelated and in what proportions they have been adjusted? Hence, this interrelation is called harmony, a word derived from music where we definitely see the strings stretched upon the lyre. If all the strings were to give forth the same sound, there would be no song; it is variation in degrees of tension that produces different sounds. These different sounds, however, joined together by a guiding intelligence, produce, not beauty for the onlookers, but sweetness of sound for the listeners. Whoever has recognized that same guiding intelligence in our human members is so overcome with wonder, is so enthralled that he prefers that marvellous design to all physical beauty. Now we do not understand it, but then we shall understand, not because things will be laid bare, but because it will not be possible to conceal even things that are covered.

(5) Someone answering me will say: 'If things are covered, how will it not be possible to conceal them? Will not our hearts and our inner organs be hidden?' In that fellowship of the saints, my brethren, all will mutually see the thoughts which now only God sees. There no one wishes to conceal what he thinks because no one thinks evil. Hence the Apostle says:[5] 'Pass no judgment before the time,' that is, do not judge rashly because you do not see the intention from which one acts. If something is done which can proceed

5 1 Cor. 4.5.

from a good heart, do not censure it; do not take upon yourself more than your humanity warrants. To see the heart is God's privilege; it is not man's prerogative to judge except in regard to those matters which are manifest. So the Apostle says: 'Pass no judgment before the time.' What does 'before the time' mean? He goes on to say: 'Until the Lord comes and brings to light the things hidden in darkness.' In the following words the Apostle shows clearly what darkness he referred to in this passage: 'And brings to light the things hidden in darkness.' What is that darkness? Hear what follows: 'And he will make manifest the counsels of hearts.' To bring to light the things hidden in darkness is equivalent to making manifest the counsel of hearts. Now, therefore, our thoughts are in full view to each one of us individually because we know them; but they are in darkness to our neighbors because they do not see them. There your neighbor is going to have knowledge of what you know you are thinking. Why are you afraid? Now you wish to conceal your thoughts, and you fear to make them public because, perchance, you sometimes think something evil, something base, or something vain. But, when you will be there, you will think nothing but what is good, nothing but what is honorable, nothing but what is true, nothing but what is pure, nothing but what is sincere. Just as you are willing to have your countenance seen now, so then you will be willing to have your conscience seen.

(6) For will not that very knowledge, my dearly beloved, will not that very knowledge belong to all of us? Do you think that you will recognize me because you know me, and that you will not recognize my father whom you do not know or some bishop or other who presided in this church many years ago? You will know everybody. Those who will be there will not recognize each other because they will see their countenances; there will be mutual recognition because of greater knowledge. Thus, all will see and will see much more keenly, just as Prophets are accustomed to see here. When they will be filled with God, they will see divinely, nor will anything

exist there calculated to oppose or to escape the individual.

Therefore, all our members will exist there, even those which are looked upon as shameful here; but there they will not be so, since the glory of integrity will not be troubled there where the disgrace of lust will not exist. Behold, even here where in a certain manner necessity is the mother of all our works (a necessity which will not exist there), nevertheless, we find certain members which God has placed in our bodies for no specific uses but for adornment alone.

(7) For some moments now I have been referring in a cursory way to our members. Now let us go over that matter somewhat more carefully. We have eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, nostrils for smelling, a mouth and tongue for speaking, teeth for eating, a throat for swallowing, a stomach for receiving and digesting, intestines for passing food to the lower parts, and those members which are called pudenda for excreting or for generating, hands for working, and feet for walking. But of what use is a beard unless it be for beauty alone? Why did God create a beard for man? I see its beauty; I do not seek its use. The reason why women have breasts is quite clear, namely, that they may nurse their little ones; but why do men have paps? If you regard their use, there is none; if you regard their appearance, a mammillated breast becomes a man. Take away the paps from a manly breast and see how much beauty you have taken away and how much ugliness you have substituted.

(8) Therefore, my dearly beloved, believe and maintain that [in the risen life] there will be no usefulness for many of our members, but that no one of them will be deprived of glory. There where the greatest peace will prevail, nothing will be unsightly, nothing inharmonious, nothing monstrous, nothing calculated to offend the eyes, but in all things God will be praised. For if now, in such frailty of the flesh and in such weak operation of our members, such great beauty of the body appears that it entices the passionate and stimulates the learned and the thoughtful to investigate it, and

if the harmony of numbers is found in the body indicating that the Creator of these members is no other than the Creator of the heavens and that the same One has created the lowest and the highest, then, how much more [beautiful will the body be] there where there will be no passion, no corruption, no unsightly deformity, no miserable necessity, but, instead, unending eternity, beautiful truth, and the utmost happiness?

(9) But you say to me: 'What am I going to do? If there will be no use for my members there, what am I going to do?' Does existing, seeing, loving, praising seem idleness to you? Behold! These holy days which are celebrated after the Resurrection of the Lord signify the life that is to come after our resurrection. For, just as the forty days before Easter symbolized the life full of suffering in this mortal period of distress, so these joyful days point to the future life where we are destined to reign with the Lord. The life which is signified by the forty days before Easter is our burden now; the life which is symbolized by the fifty days after Easter is not possessed now, but is an object of hope and is loved while it is hoped for. By that very love we praise God who promised this eternal life to us, and our praises are Alleluias. For what does 'Alleluia' mean? It is a Hebrew word signifying 'praise God,' *allelu* meaning 'praise' and *Ia* meaning 'God.' Therefore, by our 'Alleluia' we cry out: 'Praise God,' and we arouse one another to praise God. We sing praises to God, we chant our 'Alleluias' with hearts attuned to harmony far better than with the chords of the lyre. When we have sung our praises, impelled by our weakness we withdraw to refresh our bodies. Why do we do this, except because we are faint? Furthermore, the weakness of the flesh is so great and the annoyance of this life so oppressive that everything, no matter how great it be, eventually leads to aversion. When these days were drawing to a close, how we longed for those of the coming year, and with how much eagerness we approached them after a lapse of time! But, if we were given

the command: 'Sing Alleluias without ceasing,' we would excuse ourselves. Why? Because in our weariness we would not be able to do so, because even in the face of such a good we would be overcome by our distaste. There [in the risen life] no weakness, no aversion will exist. Stand and give praise, you 'who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.'[6] Why do you question what you are going to do there? The Psalmist says: 'Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise thee for ever and ever.'[7]

Sermon 244

On John 20.1-18

(1) The reading of the account of the Resurrection of the Lord from the Gospel of St. John began today. We heard and we witnessed with the eyes of faith the attitude of a devoted woman toward the Lord Jesus. She was seeking Jesus; however, she was as yet looking for the corpse of a dead man, and she was loving Him as if He were only a good teacher. She did not know, nor did she believe, that He had risen from the dead. Because she saw the stone rolled away from the tomb, she believed that the body which she was seeking had been taken away, and she reported the sad news to the disciples. Two of them ran ahead, one of whom was Peter and the other, John. The latter was the one whom Jesus loved, that is, in a special way beyond the others, for as their Lord He loved them all. They ran forward to see whether the woman was telling the truth [when she said] that the body had been removed from the tomb. They reached the place, observed carefully, and, failing to find the body, they believed. But what did they believe? What

6 Ps. 133.1.
7 Ps. 83.5.

they ought not to have believed. Therefore, when you heard the words: 'And they believed,' perhaps you thought that they believed what they should believe, that is, that the Lord had risen from the dead. They did not believe this, but rather what the woman had announced. Indeed, so that you may know that they believed this, the Evangelist adds directly: 'For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.'[1] Where is their faith? Where is the truth so often attested? Did not the Lord Jesus Himself tell them on various occasions before His Passion that He had to be betrayed and put to death but that He would rise again? Yet He spoke to deaf people. Not long before, Peter said to Him: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Not long before, he heard: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven. And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'[2] Faith such as this was overwhelmed when the Lord was crucified. For Peter believed in the Son of God for only so long, until he saw Him hanging on the cross, until he saw Him pierced with nails, until he saw Him dead, until he saw Him buried. Then he lost what he had possessed. Where is the rock? Where is the stability of the rock? Christ Himself was the Rock, but Peter was derived from the Rock. The Rock had risen again to give stability to Peter, for Peter would have perished if the Rock were not alive.[3]

(2) Afterwards, however, when the Lord said to the woman: 'Mary,' she, turning, recognized Him and called Him Master, that is, 'Rabboni.'[4] The Resurrection of the Lord was manifested to this woman. What, therefore, did

1 John 20.9.
2 Matt. 16.16-19.
3 Here, as elsewhere in the works of St. Augustine, the English translation fails to carry the effect of the author's play upon words. See Bardy, *op. cit.* 96.
4 John 20.16.

He mean by: 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father'? The problem is perplexing in several respects: in the first place, because He forbade her to touch Him, as if He could be touched with malice by the one touching; secondly, because in giving the reason why He was unwilling to be touched and why He forbade it, He said: 'For I have not yet ascended to my Father,' as if to say: 'Then, when I shall have ascended to My Father, you shall touch Me.' Was she forbidden to touch Him present on earth, and able to touch Him seated in heaven? Truly, I questioned the meaning of the words: 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father.' Now I add a further query: When He rose again, just as He Himself predicted and the Evangelists say, and just as we heard a few moments ago when the holy lessons were read, He appeared to His disciples, and, since they thought He was a spirit, He said to them: 'Why are you disturbed, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and feet, that it is myself. Feel me and see.'[5] He had not yet ascended, had He? He had not yet ascended to His Father, and still He said to His disciples: 'Feel me and see.' Where is His command: 'Do not touch me'?

Hereupon someone perhaps will say: 'He was willing to be touched by men; but He was unwilling to be touched by women.' If He had scorned womankind, He would not have been born of a woman. Nevertheless, whatever the words mean, they are capable of giving rise to a problem whereby it is declared that, before the Lord ascended to His Father, He was willing to be touched by men and unwilling to be touched by women.[6] The Evangelist Matthew says—in fact he has described the incident—that some women, including Mary Magdalen herself, met the risen Lord and embraced His feet.[7] The question is reduced in many respects to what

5 Luke 24.38-40.

6 The reading of the Codex edited by Jacobus Sirmondus has been followed here: *Verumtamen quiquid hoc est, potest. . . Ait Evangelist Matthaeus, ipse enim narravit.*

7 Cf. Matt. 28.8-11.

the Lord meant by: 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father.' All that I have said I have said for the purpose of increasing the difficulty of the question which you see is great and, as it were, insoluble. May the Lord assist me in its solution. May He who deigned to set this problem before us deign to set forth the explanation. Pray with me for this result; give your attention to me, your heart to Him. I shall share with you what He deigns to suggest to me. Let Him who knows better enlighten me; I am learned enough to be docile to instruction. But let him who does not know better hear from me what He knows.

(3) As we have heard and as it seems evident, the disciples thought that the Lord Jesus was a Man, and they balanced their belief accordingly; they did not raise it higher. They walked with Christ on earth. They knew that He had been made Man for our sake; they did not know that He made us. Christ Himself is the Maker and the One made. See Him as Maker: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him.' See Him as the One made: 'And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.'[8] Consequently, we see Jesus, but it is by means of the faith of the Apostles which has been preached to us. What we know they did not yet know. I do not wrong them. I do not dare to call them ignorant; nevertheless, I see them acknowledging their ignorance. They did not know, but they afterwards learned what we now know. They did not yet know what we know: that Christ is both God and Man; that Christ is the Maker of things and that He was made among things; that Christ is both the Creator of man and that He is a created Man. As God, Christ is equal to the Father; He is just as great as the Father is; He is such as the Father is; what the Father is, Christ is; but He is not who the Father is. He is what the Father is because the

8 John 1.1-4,14.

Father is God and He is God; the Father is omnipotent and He is omnipotent; the Father is immutable and He is immutable—He is that which the Father is. He is not who the Father is because the latter is the Father and He is the Son. So far as anyone who knows this is concerned, Christ has ascended to the Father; so far as he who does not know this is concerned, Christ has not yet ascended to the Father; He is a little Child with that person; He is on earth with that person; but, in the eyes of that person, He is not yet equal to the Omnipotent One. To the one making progress, He is ascending; He is ascending with him who advances.

Therefore, what is the meaning of the words: 'Do not touch me'? Touch signifies faith. For by touching, one draws near to him who is touched. See that woman who suffered from a hemorrhage. She said in her heart: 'If I touch the fringe of his garment I shall be healed.'[9] She approached and touched; she was healed. What does 'she approached and touched' mean? She drew near and believed. So that you may understand that by believing she touched Him, the Lord said: 'Someone touched me.' What does 'touched Me' mean except 'believed in Me'? And, so that you might understand that these statements 'touched Me' and 'believed in Me' mean the same thing, the disciples answered and said to Him: 'The crowds press upon thee and dost thou say, "Who touched me?"'[10] If Thou wert walking alone, if the crowd had granted Thee a space for walking, if no one were near Thee, then Thou wouldst say well: "Someone touched me." But a crowd presses upon Thee and Thou dost say that one person is touching Thee.' And He repeated: 'Someone touched me.' For, first He had said: 'Who touched me?' and afterwards: 'Someone touched me. You do not understand my meaning because you say: "The crowd presses upon thee." Someone touched me. That crowd knows how to

9 Cf. Matt. 9.21.
10 Luke 8.45,46.

press; it does not know how to touch.'[11] It is evident that this was His meaning when He said: 'Who touched me?' and 'Someone touched me,' so that they may believe that faith is the touch of the one touching Him or, rather, the drawing near of the one believing in Him.

What, then, is the meaning of the words: 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father'? You think that I am what you see Me to be. 'I have not yet ascended to my Father.' You see Me as Man; you think that I am only a Man. I am, indeed, a Man, but let not your faith halt there. Do not touch Me in such a way as to believe that I am merely a Man. 'For I have not yet ascended to my Father.' I am ascending to My Father, but touch Me, that is, advance, understand that I am equal to the Father; then touch Me and you will be saved. 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father.' You see that I have descended; you do not yet see that I have ascended. 'For I have not yet ascended to my Father.' I have emptied Myself, 'taking the nature of a slave and being made like unto men, and appearing in the form of man.'[12] [You see] that in this form I was crucified, that in this form I was buried, that in this form I rose again, but you do not see that other truth: 'Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal to God.' You do not yet see that I ascended. Do not lose heaven by touching the earth; do not fail to believe in God by cleaving to the Man in Christ. 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father.'

(4) Let the follower of Arius[13] come forward, but let the follower of Photinus[14] come first. I say to the disciple of

11 The reading *nescitis* of Sirmondus has been followed here instead of *nostis* of the text. St. Augustine combines the words of Scripture with his own additions.

12 Phil. 2.7,6. I have adopted here and below the English translation of Prat, *Theology of St. Paul* I 312.

13 Arius was a Greek-speaking African cleric (250-336) who propagated a heresy which denied the divinity of Christ. According to his teaching, the Son of God was a super-angelic creature, the only Being directly created by God; through the Son, or the Logos, the universe

Photinus: 'Do not touch.' What does 'do not touch' mean? Do not believe thus, for, as far as you are concerned, Christ has not yet ascended to the Father. Let the disciple of Arius come forward. 'I,' he says, 'believe that Christ is God, but less [than the Father].' Then, so far as you are concerned, He has not yet ascended to the Father. Since He actually has ascended to the Father, stretch out so that you may touch Him; stretch out; touch God. 'But,' he says, 'I do acknowledge that He is God, but of another nature and of another substance; that He was created, not that He is the One by whom all things were created; that He was made, not that in the beginning He was the Word without the limits of time.' Then you are still on the under side; not yet has He ascended to the Father so far as you are concerned. Do you wish Him to ascend to the Father in your regard? Believe that He 'being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God.'[15] It was not robbery, because it was

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was created; in return for His fidelity to God, the Son was granted a share in the divine prerogatives in so far as this was possible for a creature, but He was not of one essence, nature, and substance with the infinite, omnipotent, eternal, unchangeable God. The heresy spread rapidly and threatened to disrupt the Catholic Church, especially since it was favored by the emperors of the East. It was condemned at the first great Ecumenical Council of the Church at Nicaea in 325, at which the untiring labors of St. Athanasius brought about the adoption of the term consubstantial (*homooúsion*) to express the identity of the Son in essence, nature, and substance with the Father. Among the many heresies which sprang from Arianism was that called Apollinarianism which stressed Arius' heretical view of Christ's human nature, that is, that Christ took flesh but not a soul, that in Him the place of the human soul was taken by the pre-existing Son. Pope Damasus condemned this doctrine in 377. See M. L. Cozens, *Handbook of Heresies* (London 1928) 30-36; H. Belloc, *The Great Heresies* (New York 1938) 31-69.

14 Photinus was Bishop of Sirmium (c. 376) who taught that Christ was a man miraculously born, who had attained divine dignity by reason of his high moral development. See Bardenhewer, *Patrologie* (trans. Shahan) 242.

15 Phil. 2.6. Here, as elsewhere in the Sermons (e.g., 264.3,7; 187.5; 212.1; 214.5.), St. Augustine has adopted the active sense of the Latin text, *non rapinam arbitratus est,* while the Greek Fathers and most modern English translators favor the passive rendering of ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο. For a complete discussion of the problem see Prat, *The Theology of St. Paul* I 310-322.

His nature. By robbery something is taken unlawfully; by its nature something is recognized and acknowledged. 'Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal to God.' Thus, He was born, and He was always born; both born and always born, and born without a beginning.

What do you say, O disciple of Arius? That there was a time when He was not the Son? Do you see that, so far as you are concerned, He has not yet ascended to the Father? Do not touch, do not believe in this manner. There is no interval of time between the Father and the Son. The Father begot; the Son was born. Without the limits of time, the One begot; without the limits of time, He by whom all time came into being was born. Touch in this way and, so far as you are concerned, He has ascended to the Father. He is the Word, but He is co-eternal with God; He is the Wisdom of God, but the Father never existed without this Wisdom. Your own flesh has to answer you; it is ready to converse with you and to say to you in this darkness: 'How was He born?' The darkness speaks to you. You cry out: 'Let it be explained to me.' I, too, cry out: 'Let it be explained to me.' What do you wish to be explained? 'Was He born or was He not born? For, He would not be the Son if He were not born. If, then, He was born, there was a time when He did not exist.' This is false: you speak as earth and you speak about earth. 'Then explain to me,' you say, 'how He was born if He always existed.' I do not explain; I do not explain; I am not able to do so. I do not explain; but, in my place, I substitute the Prophet who says: 'Who shall declare his generation?'[16]

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16 Isa. 53.8.

Sermon 245

(1) Today, too, the account of the Resurrection of the Lord was read aloud from the holy Gospel. Moreover, the Gospel according to St. John was read. We heard statements which we did not hear in the other books of the Gospel. Indeed, the preaching of the truth is common to all the Evangelists; they all drank of the same fountain. But, in the preaching of the Gospel, as I have often explained to your Charity,[1] all four have set forth certain events; three have set forth some; two, other events; and even individually they have recounted still other details. Consequently, the Evangelist John alone mentions what we have just heard according to the Gospel of John: that Mary Magdalen saw the Lord and that the Lord said to her: 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father.'[2] On this subject, therefore, I must speak to your Holiness.[3] Having seen the linen cloths in the sepulchre [these women] believed, not that the Lord had risen, but that He had been taken away. When John himself (for he calls himself 'the one whom Jesus loved') had heard the women making their announcement and saying: 'They have taken away my Lord from the tomb,' he ran with Peter, examined the tomb, saw the linen cloths, and believed. What did he believe? Not that the Lord had risen, but that He had disappeared from the tomb. The following words substantiate this, for what we have just heard is written thus: 'He observed, he saw, and he believed; for as yet he did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.'[4] What he believed was evident; he believed what was not of faith. He believed; but what he believed was false. Afterwards, the Lord appeared to him and, dispelling error, implanted truth.

1 See Sermon 214 note 30.
2 John 20.17.
3 See Sermon 214 note 30.
4 Cf. John 13.23; 20.2,8-10.

(2) Nevertheless, what may disturb the reader and listener who is attentive and careful is in what sense this statement was made: 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father.' Here, with the help of the Lord Himself, let us consider just what was said. Truly, the significance of the passage, 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father,' is troublesome. For, when did He ascend to the Father? On the fortieth day after His Resurrection, as the Acts of the Apostles indicate, that day which we are soon to observe in His honor. Then He ascended to the Father; then the disciples, who touched Him with their hands, followed Him with their eyes; then the angelic voice uttered the words: 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to heaven? This Jesus who has been taken up from you, shall come in the same way as you have seen him going up to heaven.'[5]

If, therefore, He then ascended into heaven, what answer do we make, my brethren? Was Mary not able to touch Him when He was standing here on earth and was she able to touch Him when He was seated in heaven? If she could not do so here, how much less would she be able to do it there? What, then, is the significance of the words: 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father'? As a matter of fact, the words sound to me as if He were saying: 'Touch Me then when I have ascended; do not touch Me before I ascend.' O Lord, art Thou here, and do I not touch Thee; and shall I touch Thee when Thou hast ascended? Furthermore, if He shrank from human touch before He ascended to the Father, how was it that He presented Himself to His disciples not only to be seen but also to be handled by them, since He said: 'Why do you reflect in your hearts? See my hands and my feet. Feel me and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.'[6] Besides, that incredulous disciple, Thomas, touched His pierced side and

5 Acts 1.11.
6 Cf. Luke 24.38-41.

exclaimed: 'My Lord and my God.'[7] When he thus touched, Jesus had not yet ascended to the Father.

Perhaps someone who lacks wisdom has declared; 'Before He ascended to His Father, men could touch Him; but women could do so only when He had ascended to the Father.' That is an absurd thought and a perverse opinion. In a word, let the Church hear what Mary heard. Let all hear; let all understand; let all do this. What, then, is the significance of 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father'? Because you see Me, you think that I am merely a Man; you do not yet know that I am equal to the Father. Do not touch Me as such; do not believe that I am mere Man; but understand that the Word is equal to the Father. What, then, is the significance of: 'Do not touch me'? Do not believe. Do not believe what? That I am merely what you see. I shall ascend to My Father; then touch Me. As far as you are concerned, I ascend when you understand that I am equal [to the Father]. As long as you consider Me as less [than the Father], I have not yet ascended so far as you are concerned.

(3) Moreover, I think that, in the woman who touched the fringe of Christ's garment and was made whole, we can easily understand that to touch is to believe. You recall the Gospel: The Lord Jesus Christ went to visit the daughter of a ruler of the synagogue who was first said to be ill, and afterwards, dead. As He went along, behold from a side path there came a woman who, having suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years, had spent all her means on physicians, who prescribed in vain without curing her. She said: 'If I touch the fringe of his garment I shall be saved.'[8] To make such a statement was already to touch. In short, hear the Lord's judgment.[9] When she had been healed according to her faith, the Lord Jesus Christ said: 'Someone

7 John 20.28.
8 Cf. Matt. 9.18-23; Mark 5.22-30; Luke 8.40-45.
9 Cf. Luke 8.45,46.

touched me.' And the disciples answered: 'The crowds press upon thee, and dost thou say, "Who touched me?" ' But He replied: 'Someone touched me; for I know that power has gone forth from me.' Grace went forth so that she might be healed, but without detracting from Him. Hence, the disciples said: 'The crowds press upon Thee, and didst Thou perceive this man or that woman?' But He answered: 'Someone touched Me. The others press upon Me; one touched.' What is the significance of 'they press; one touched'? The Jews still struggle; the Church has believed .

(4) According to this interpretation by which we see that the woman touched, that is to say, that she believed, according to this same interpretation were the words said to Mary: 'Do not touch me; I will ascend, then touch. In fact, touch then when you have understood the words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God." ' Indeed, 'the Word was made flesh,'[10] but the Word remains unsullied, unspotted, unchangeable, and untouched. But, because you see only a Man, you do not see the Word. I do not want you to believe in His humanity and disregard the Word. Let the whole Christ be visible to you because as the Word He is equal to the Father. Therefore, He said: 'Do not touch Me now, because you do not yet see who I am.'

Hence, let the Church, which Mary represented figuratively, hear what Mary heard. We would all touch if we would all believe. He has already ascended to the Father; He sits at the right hand of the Father. The whole Church acknowledges this today in the words: 'He ascended into Heaven and He sits at the right hand of the Father.' Those who are baptized hear this; they believe this before they are baptized. Therefore, when they believe, Mary [the Church] touches Christ. The understanding is darkened, but sound; it is closed to unbelievers, but open to the one who knocks in faith. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ is there, and He is also here

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10 John 1.1,14.

with us; He is with the Father and He is in us; He does not withdraw from the Father nor does He depart from us; as the Lord, He teaches us how to pray, and as the Son, He listens to us with the Father.

Sermon 246

(1) After the Resurrection, the Lord Jesus appeared to His disciples in many ways. They had [the source material] from which the Evangelists might write as divine inspiration furnished to them the recollection of things to write about. One Evangelist related one incident, another told something else. Any one of them could omit what was true; but he could not put in anything false. Consider that one person said all those things, for One truly did say them, because there was one Spirit in all the Evangelists. What did we hear today? This, that the disciples did not believe that Jesus had risen again. Likewise, they did not believe Him although He had previously predicted this. Their disbelief is evident, and on that account it was written down so that we might give great thanks to God, because we believe in Him whom we do not see on earth, while they with great difficulty were convinced by the testimony of their hands and eyes of what we believe.

(2) You heard that His disciple entered the tomb and 'saw the linen cloths lying there, . . . and believed; for as yet he did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.'[1] Thus you have heard; thus it was written: 'He saw and he believed, for as yet he did not understand the Scripture.' But it ought to have been written: 'He saw and he did not believe, for as yet he did not understand the Scripture.' What, then, is the significance of 'He saw the linen cloths and he believed'? What did he believe? What a woman had said: 'They have taken the Lord from the tomb.' For,

1 Cf. John 20.6-10.

if you heard—nay, rather—as you heard, that woman said: 'They have taken away the Lord from the tomb, and I do not know where they have laid him.'[2] When they heard this, they ran together; he entered the tomb, saw the linens, and believed what the woman had said, namely, that Christ had been taken away from the tomb. Why did he believe that Christ had been taken and stolen from the tomb? Why? 'For as yet he did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.' He had entered and had not found. He ought to have believed that He had risen again, not that He had been stolen.

(3) What, then, did the Lord mean? We are in the habit of speaking to you about this matter every year. Moreover, the lesson is solemnly read and the sermon itself is solemnly delivered. Why did the Lord speak to the woman who now recognized Him? For, at first, He had said: 'Whom dost thou seek? Why art thou weeping?'[3] But she thought He was the gardener. And truly, if you would consider how we are His plants, Christ is the Gardener. Is He not the Gardener who planted in His garden a grain of mustard seed, that is, a very small and pungent seed, which grew and climbed upward, making such a mighty tree that even the birds of the air rested in its branches? 'If you have faith like a mustard seed,' He Himself said.[4] A grain of mustard seed seems trifling; there is nothing more insignificant in appearance, nothing stronger in taste. What else does it symbolize but the intense ardor and the profound strength of faith in the Church?

Therefore, Mary rightly considered Him a Gardener and she said 'Sir' to Him in token of respect, because she was seeking a favor; it was for that reason that she called Him Sir. 'If thou hast removed him, show me where thou hast laid him and I will take him away.'[5] She spoke as if she

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2 John 20,2.
3 John 20.15.
4 Cf. Matt. 13.31-33; 17.19.
5 Cf. John 20.15.

were saying: 'For me He is necessary; for you, He is not.' O woman, you think a dead Christ is necessary for you; recognize the living Christ. You are seeking a dead Christ, but He Himself alive is speaking to you. Dead, He would have been of no service to us, unless He had risen from the dead. Furthermore, He who was sought as dead manifested Himself alive. How did He do this? He called her by her own name, 'Mary.' And immediately, on hearing her own name, she answered: 'Rabboni.' A gardener could say: 'Whom dost thou seek? Why art thou weeping?' But no one except the Lord could say: 'Mary.' He who called her to the kingdom of heaven called her by name. He used that name, Mary, which He Himself had written in His book. And she called Him 'Rabboni,' which means 'Master.' She recognized Him by whom she was given the light to recognize Him; He who was first thought to be a Gardener was seen now as Christ. And still the Lord said to her: 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father.'[6]

(4) What do these words signify: 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father'? If she could not touch Him when He was present on earth, could she touch Him when He was seated in heaven? It is as if He were to say: 'Do not touch Me now; you will touch Me when I shall have ascended to the Father.' Let your Charity recall yesterday's reading, when the Lord appeared to the disciples and they thought that they saw a spirit; but He, wishing to dispel their illusion, offered Himself to be touched. What did He say? It was read yesterday; the sermon was based on it. 'Why are you disturbed, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and feet; . . . Feel me and see.'[7] Had He yet ascended to the Father when He said: 'Feel me and see'? He presents Himself to be touched by His disciples, not merely to be touched, but to be handled, so that faith in His true flesh, faith in His true body might

6 John 20.17.
7 Luke 24.38-40.

be produced, so that the substantiality of truth might be presented to human touch. Therefore, He offered Himself to be felt by the hands of the disciples, yet to the woman He says: 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father.' What does He mean? Could men touch Him only on earth, and did women have power to touch Him in heaven?

What, therefore, does 'to touch' signify except 'to believe'? For, by faith we touch Christ; it is better not to touch Him with one's hand and to touch Him by faith, than to feel Him with one's hand and not to touch Him by faith. It was not a great boon to touch Christ with one's hand. The Jews touched Him when they seized Him; they touched Him when they bound Him; they touched Him when they lifted Him; they touched Him, and by touching Him with evil intent they lost what they touched. By belief which touches, O Catholic Church, faith makes thee safe. So, touch only by faith, that is, approach faithfully and believe firmly. If you have looked upon Christ as only a Man, you have touched Him on earth. If you have believed that Christ as God is equal to the Father, then you have touched Him when He ascended to the Father. Hence, so far as we are concerned, He has ascended when we understand Him rightly. Then, at that time He ascended once; but now He ascends daily. O, for how many persons He has not yet ascended! For how many persons He still lingers upon the earth! How many say: 'He was a great man'! How many say: 'He was a Prophet'! How many antichrists have arisen who, like Photinus, have declared: 'He was a man; He was nothing more; but He excelled all holy and devout men in the excellence of His wisdom and justice; but certainly He was not God.' O Photinus, you have touched Him on earth; you have hastened to touch; you have rushed headlong; and, on this account, you have not come to the fatherland because you have wandered from the path.

(5) Next, let us hear His words: 'I ascend to my Father

and your Father, to my God and your God.'[8] Why does He not say: 'To our Father and our God,' instead of making the distinction: 'to my Father and your Father'? 'My Father' because I am His only Son; 'your Father' by grace, not by nature. 'My Father' because I have always been His Son; 'your Father' because I have chosen you. 'My God and your God.' Whence is God the Father of Christ? Because He begot Him. Whence is He His God? Because He also created Him. He begot Christ as the only-begotten Word; He created Him from the seed of David according to the flesh. Therefore, God is both the Father of Christ and the God of Christ: Father of Christ according to His divinity, God of Christ according to His weakness. Hear how He is the God of Christ; let us question the Psalmist: 'From my mother's womb,' he says, 'thou art my God.'[9] Before the womb of My mother [Thou art] My Father; from My mother's womb, My God. Consider, then, why there is the distinction in the words: 'My Father and your Father.' There is this distinction because in one way He is the Father of the only-begotten Son; in another way He is our Father; His Father by nature, ours by grace.

Therefore, should He not have said: 'To my Father and to your Father,' but 'to our God,' because, if He is God, He is the God of creatures, and, on that account, of Christ, because Christ is a creature according to His human nature? God is the Father of Christ with distinction [rightfully noted] because Christ is the Creator; but why the distinction, 'God of Christ,' since, according to His human nature, Christ is a creature, a creature even as we are? According to His human nature, Christ is certainly a servant, 'taking the nature of a slave,'[10] in the words of the Apostle. Why, therefore, the distinction: 'My God and your God'? There is definitely a distinction. For God formed us all through sinful genera-

8 John 20.17.
9 Ps. 21.11.
10 Phil. 2.7.

tion; but He as Man was fashioned differently. He was born of a virgin; His Mother conceived Him, not by passion, but by faith. He did not derive sinful generation from Adam. We have all been born in sin; He who cleansed our sins was born without sin. Therefore, the distinction is made in the words: 'My God and your God.' You have been created from seed, from man and woman; from the desire of the flesh with sinful generation you have come into being in regard to whom the Scripture says: 'Who is clean in thy sight? Not even the infant whose life upon earth lasts for but one day.'[11] In a word, in the case of infants things are hurried along so that what they brought with them at birth, not what they added in life, may be removed. But Christ did not come thus. 'My God and your God,' 'my God' on account of the likeness of sinful flesh; 'your God' on account of sinful flesh.

(6) Up to this point it has been sufficient to draw our sermons from the Gospel passages which pertain to the Resurrection of the Lord and which John the Evangelist wrote, and for that reason other passages about the Resurrection of the Lord from the same Gospel are going to be read. For no one has written in greater detail about His Resurrection than St. John, so that his account cannot be read in one day, but is also read on a second day, and on a third day until whatever St. John has written about the Resurrection of the Lord is finished.

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11 Cf. Job. 14.4. (*secundum* Septuagint).

Sermon 247

On John 20.19-31

(1) The account of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the four Evangelists seemed to have been completed yesterday. For, on the first day the account of the Resurrection was read according to Matthew, on the second day according to Luke, on the third day according to Mark, and on the fourth day, that is, yesterday, according to John. But, since John and Luke wrote very many things about the Resurrection itself and the events which occurred after the Resurrection, accounts which cannot be read aloud in one reading, we heard some passages from St. John both yesterday and today; and still other readings remain. What, then, did we hear today? That on the very day on which He rose again, that is, on the Lord's Day, when it had become late and the disciples were together in one place, with the doors closed for fear of the Jews, the Lord appeared in the midst of them. Hence, on that day, as John the Evangelist is witness, He appeared twice to His disciples, once in the morning and once in the evening. Also, a passage from the account of His appearance early in the morning has been read aloud to you; that He appeared again late on the same day we have just heard when it was read aloud. There was no need for me to mention these facts to you, but only for you to note them. However, it was fitting for me to mention them, by reason of the scant intelligence of certain persons and the excessive negligence of others, so that you may understand, not only what you have heard, but also from what portion of the Scripture that which you have heard was read to you.

(2) Let us see, therefore, what today's reading presents to us for discussion. Obviously, the passage urges us, and in a certain manner tells us to say something as to how the Lord was able to appear to His disciples when the doors

were closed, since He had risen in such physical substantiality that He was not only seen by His disciples but even touched by them. Some persons are so disturbed about this matter that they endanger themselves, setting up the prejudice of their own reasoning against divine miracles. In fact, they argue in this fashion: 'If there was a body, if there were flesh and bones, if that body which hung on the cross rose again from the tomb, how could it enter through closed doors? If it could not do this,' they say, 'then it was not done. If it could do this, how was it able to do so?' If you understand the way, there is no miracle; and if there seems to you to be no miracle, you are close to denying that He rose again from the tomb.

Look back over the miracles of your Lord from the beginning, and give me an explanation for each one. Man did not approach, and a virgin conceived. Explain how a virgin conceived without a husband. Where reason has failed, there faith builds up. Behold, you have one miracle in the conception of the Lord. Hear another in connection with the parturition. A virgin gave birth and remained a virgin. Therefore, even before the Lord rose again He was born through closed doors. You question me saying: 'If He entered through closed doors, where is the extension of His body?' I answer: 'If He walked upon the sea, where is the weight of His body?' But you say the Lord did that as the Lord. Then, did He cease to be the Lord when He rose again? What of the fact that He caused Peter to walk upon the sea?[1] What divinity was able to accomplish in the one case, faith brought about in the other. Christ, however, [did so] because He possessed power; Peter, because Christ helped him. If, therefore, you begin to discuss the explanation of miracles in a human way, I am afraid you are losing faith. Do you not know that nothing is impossible to God? Hence, to the one who has said to you: 'If He entered through closed doors, He had no body,' reply with the argument: 'On the contrary, if He

1 Cf. Matt. 14.25-34.

was touched, He had a body; if He ate, He had a body; furthermore, He did that by a miracle, not by nature.' Is not the daily course of nature itself something to be amazed at? All things are full of miracles, but our wonder is lessened by their repetition. Give me an explanation—I am asking about things ordinary and familiar—give me an explanation as to why the seed of so great a tree as the fig tree is so small that it can hardly be seen, and why the lowly gourd produces such a large seed. However, if you consider with your mind and not with your eyes: in that minute grain of seed, though it is scarcely visible, in that insignificance, in those cramped quarters, a root lies hid, strength has been implanted, future leaves are attached, and fruit which will appear on the tree is already present in the seed. There is no need of mentioning many examples; no one offers an explanation of daily happenings; yet you demand of me an explanation about miracles. Then, read the Gospel, and believe that things have been done which are wonderful. What God has done is still greater, and you do not marvel at what surpasses all His other works: there was nothing; the world now exists.

(3) But, you say the bulk of a body could not pass through doors which were closed. How great was that bulk? I ask you. 'As great as exists in all bodies.' Not so great as in a camel? 'No, assuredly, not so great.' Read the Gospel;[2] hear what the Lord said when He wished to indicate the difficulty with which a rich man enters the kingdom of heaven: 'More easily does a camel pass through the eye of a needle than a rich man into the kingdom of heaven.' When they had heard this, the disciples, considering that in no way could a camel possibly pass through the eye of a needle, were sad and said to one another: 'If that is so, who, pray, will be able to save himself?' If it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven: in no way can a camel pass through the eye of a needle; therefore, it is impossible for a rich

2 Cf. Luke 18.25-27.

man to be saved. The Lord answered: 'Those things are easy for God which are impossible for men.' God can cause a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, and God can bring a rich man into the kingdom of heaven. Why do you heckle me in regard to closed doors? Closed doors certainly have a crack. Compare the crack of doors and the eye of a needle; compare the bulk of a human body with the size of camels; and do not question the divine origin of miracles.

Sermon 248

On John 21.1-14

(1) Today, also, the reading was taken from the Gospel of the Evangelist John and was about the events which took place after the Resurrection of the Lord. Along with us, your Charity heard that the Lord Jesus Christ showed Himself to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias; He who had already made them fishers of men found them still fishers of fish. Throughout the whole night they had taken nothing, but, when they saw the Lord and at His bidding let down nets, they took the large number you have heard mentioned. The Lord would never have given this command unless He wished to indicate something which it would be of benefit for us to know. Why, therefore, could it interest Jesus Christ as something great if fishes were caught or if they were not? Nevertheless, that fishing was our clue. Let me recall with you, then, those two hauls of fish which the Apostles gathered in at the bidding of the Lord Jesus Christ: one before the Passion; the other after the Resurrection. In these two catches of fish, therefore, the whole Church is represented, both as she is now, and as she will be in the resurrection of the dead. For now she has multitudes without num-

ber, both good and bad; after the resurrection, however, she will have only the good in a fixed number.

(2) Recall, then, that first netting of fish[1] where we see the Church such as she is at this time. The Lord Jesus found His disciples fishing when He first called them to follow Him. At that time they had taken nothing during the whole night. When He appeared, however, they heard Him say: 'Lower the nets.' And they answered: 'Master, throughout the whole night we have taken nothing, but behold, at thy word we are lowering the net.' At the bidding of the Almighty they lowered the nets. What else could happen except what He had wished? Nevertheless, by that very incident He deigned to point out to us something advantageous for us to know. The nets were lowered. At that time the Lord had not yet suffered; He had not yet risen. The nets were lowered; they took so many fish that the two boats were filled and the nets themselves were breaking from the large number of fish. Thereupon He said to them: 'Come, and I will make you fishers of men.'[2] They received from Him the nets of the word of God; they cast them into the world as though into a deep sea; they took the great multitude of Christians which we perceive and marvel at. Moreover, the two boats signified the two peoples, the Jews and the Gentiles, the members of the synagogue and of the Church, the people marked by circumcision and by uncircumcision. For, of those two ships, as of two walls coming together from different directions, Christ is the cornerstone.[3] But what have we heard? There the ships were sinking because of the great number of fish. Now the same thing is happening. Many Christians who live evil lives are pulling the Church down. It is not enough for them to crush her; in addition, they are breaking the nets. For, if the nets were not broken, schisms would not have taken place.

1 Cf. Luke 5.4-8.
2 Cf. Matt. 4.19.
3 Cf. Eph. 2.11-22.

(3) Let us pass therefore, from that fishing in which we now take part, and come to that which we ardently desire and faithfully long for. Behold, the Lord died, but He rose again. He appeared to His disciples near the sea; He ordered them to lower the nets, but not in any haphazard fashion. Notice this: in the first fishing episode He did not say to them: 'Lower the nets to the right or to the left,' because, if He were to specify 'to the left' only evil persons would be signified, and, if He were to specify 'to the right,' only the good would be indicated. Hence, He did not say either 'to the right' or 'to the left,' because the good mixed with the evil were to be taken. But now, after the Resurrection, hear, perceive, rejoice, hope, and understand what is the nature of the Church. 'Cast the nets to the right side,' He said.[4] Only those on the right side are being taken in; let not evil persons be feared. For you know He said He would separate the sheep from the goats; that He would place the sheep on the right side and the goats on the left; that He would say to those on the left: 'Go into everlasting fire,' and to those on the right: 'Receive the kingdom.'[5] See why He said: 'Cast the nets on the right side.' They cast, and they drew in; the number is fixed; there is no one beyond that number.[6] Now, however, as many as approach the altar in excess of the number are apparently included in God's people, but they are not inscribed in the book of life. It is there, then, that the number is fixed. Aim, also, at being among the number of those fishes, not only by listening and praising, but by understanding and by living good lives. Therefore, the nets are lowered, and great fish are taken, for who is small there where men will be equal to the angels?[7]

Accordingly, 153 large fish were taken. Someone will say to me: 'And will there be that many saints?' Far be it from

4 Cf. John 21.6.
5 Cf. Matt.25.41,34.
6 Cf. Ps. 39.6.
7 Cf. Matt. 22.30.

me to conjecture that there will be so small a number of saints in that kingdom, even from the Church alone. The number will be fixed, but there will be thousands upon thousands from the people of Israel. St. John in the Apocalypse says[8] that from the people of Israel alone there will be twelve times twelve thousand 'who were not defiled with women; for they remained virgins.' However, he also says that so many thousands clothed in white robes came from other nations that he was unable to count them.

(4) That number, therefore, carries some signification, and on this year's delivery of this sermon I ought to recall to you what you are accustomed to hear each year. There were 153 fishes; the number signifies thousands and thousands of the saints and of the faithful. Why, then, did the Lord deign to represent by that particular number the many thousands destined to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven? Hear the reason why: You know that the Law was given to the people of God by Moses, and that in the Law the Decalogue, that is, the Ten Commandments of the Law, is mentioned specifically. Of these commandments, the first is concerned with the worship of the one God; the second commandment is: 'Do not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain';[9] the third commandment relates to the observance of the sabbath, which the Christians keep in a spiritual manner but which the Jews violate in an earthly manner. Those three commandments refer to God; the other seven, to men. For that reason there are two chief commandments: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. . . . And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.'[10] Therefore, because those are the chief precepts, in the Decalogue three

8 Cf. Apoc. 7.14.
9 Cf. Exod. 20.7.
10 Matt. 22.37-41

commandments pertain to the love of God and seven to the love of the neighbor. What are the seven pertaining to man? 'Honor thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.'[11]

(5) No one keeps the Ten Commandments by his own powers unless he is aided by the grace of God. If, therefore, no one fulfill these commandments by his own strength unless God helps him by His Spirit, recall now that just as the Holy Spirit is commended by the sevenfold number, according to the holy Prophet, so man is to be filled with the Spirit of God, 'of wisdom and of understanding, of counsel and of fortitude, of knowledge and of godliness, and with the spirit of the fear of God.'[12] Those seven operations commend, by the sevenfold number, the Holy Spirit who, as it were, in descending to us begins with wisdom and ends at fear. But we, in our ascent, begin with fear and are perfected in wisdom, for 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.'[13] If, then, there is need of the Spirit so that the Law may be fulfilled, add seven to ten, making the number seventeen. If you then add all the numbers from one to seventeen, the total will be 153. There is no need of mentioning all the numbers now; count them at home; count in this fashion, one plus two, plus three, plus four equals ten. In that way add the other numbers up to seventeen, and thus you will find the sacred number of the faithful and of the saints destined to be in heaven with the Lord.

11 Cf. Exod. 20.1-18; Deut. 5.6-22. St. Augustine's enumeration of the Ten Commandments approximates our catechism version more closely than either of the Scriptural passages cited.
12 Cf. Isa. 11.2-4.
13 Eccli. 1.16.

Sermon 249

(1) We have heard the Gospel account of how the Lord Jesus, after the Resurrection, appeared to the disciples who were fishing in the Sea of Tiberias. When He had first called them, He had said: 'Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.'[1] And then, indeed, when they had been called, lowering the nets at His word, they took a large number of fish, but the number is not specified. Furthermore, in that first fishing incident, He did not say to them: 'Cast the net to the right side,'[2] but only 'Cast'; He said neither 'to the right' nor 'to the left.' Nevertheless, so great a number of fish was caught that it was innumerable, and their boats were filled. And to what extent were they laden? The Gospel says: 'so that they began to sink.'[3] Then He said to them what I have mentioned above: 'Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' We belong to those nets; we have, indeed, been caught in those nets; but we do not remain captive. Let no man fear to be caught; if he can be caught, he cannot be deceived.

But what is the significance of that second fishing incident about which the Gospel told us today? The Lord, standing on the shore, appeared to the fishermen, and asked them if they had any food. They said that they did not, for they had taken nothing during the whole night. Then He said to them: 'Cast the net to the right side,' which direction He had not given on the previous occasion. They obeyed, and they were not able to draw in the net because of the great number of fish. Moreover, 153 fish were found in it. And, since it had been stated that, in the first fishing incident, the nets were breaking because of the great number of fish, the

1 Matt. 4.19.
2 Cf. John 21.6.
3 Cf. Luke 5.1-11.

Evangelist took pains to say in regard to this haul: 'And, although there were so many, the net was not torn.'[4]

(2) Let us distinguish between these two fishing incidents: the one before the Resurrection, the other after the Resurrection. In the former, the nets were lowered in any direction; the right is not mentioned, lest only the good should be included; the left is not mentioned, lest only the evil should be included. Hence, the good and the evil were mixed together. And the nets were broken by reason of the great number. Broken nets suggest schisms. We see this; thus it is; thus it happens. The two ships are filled on account of the two peoples—the circumcised and the uncircumcised—and they are filled to such an extent that they are overwhelmed and almost sinking. What this signifies is lamentable. A group has upset the Church. How great is the number of those who have been living evil lives, pressing and complaining! But the boats have not been sunk because of the good fishes.

Now let us consider that later fishing incident, the one after the Resurrection. No evil person will be there; great security will be there, but only if you will be good. Be good in the midst of evil, and so you will be good when the evil are not present. There is reason for your being disturbed in that first fishing episode; you are among evil persons, O you who hear me faithfully, O you for whom what I say does not pass in vain but descends into the heart, O you who are more afraid to live badly than to die badly because if you have lived a good life you will not have a bad death—you, therefore, who listen to me in order not only to believe but to live rightly, live good lives and so live even amidst the wicked; be unwilling to break the nets. Those who made their own decisions and were unwilling to put up with others because they were evil have broken the nets and have perished in the sea. Live good lives in the midst of the wicked; let not bad Christians persuade you to live bad lives. Let your heart not say: 'I alone am good.' If you have begun to be good, believe that, if you

4 John 21.11.

have begun to be so, others can be good, also. Do not commit adultery; do not commit fornication; do not perpetrate a fraud; do not steal; do not give false testimony; do not swear falsely; do not become inebriated; do not fail to repay loans; do not fail to restore somebody else's property found in the street. Shun these and similar actions, and you will be secure amid the bad fish. You swim about in the same nets; but you will come to the shore; you will be found on the right side after the resurrection. There, there will be no evil person. What good is it for you to know the Law, to understand the commandments of God, to know how to distinguish between good and evil if you do not act accordingly? Is not your conscience punished on account of that very knowledge? So learn that you may put your knowledge into practice.

(3) The commandments of God are contained in the Decalogue because of a great mystery of perfection. The ten precepts were written on stone tablets by the finger of God, that is, by the Holy Spirit. On one tablet were the precepts which relate to God; on the other, those which pertain to man. Why so? Because on the love of God and of neighbor depend the whole Law and the Prophets.[5] But of what value are the Ten Commandments? The Law has been given, but 'if a law had been given that could give life, justice would truly be from the Law.'[6] You know the Law, but you do not fulfill the Law. 'The letter kills,' but, so that you may fulfill what you know, 'the spirit gives life.'[7] Let seven be added to ten, for, just as the Law is signified by the Decalogue, so the Holy Spirit is represented as sevenfold. He is called down upon the baptized so that, according to the Prophet, God may give them the spirit of wisdom and of understanding—behold two; the spirit of counsel and of fortitude—behold four; the spirit of knowledge and of godliness—behold six; the spirit of fear of the Lord—behold seven.[8] When those

5 Cf. Matt. 22.37-40.
6 Gal. 3.21.
7 2 Cor. 3.6.
8 Cf. Isa. 11.2,3.

seven are added, they make ten. What did I say? The statement is, as it were, absurd: when seven and ten are added, they make ten, just as if I had forgotten how to count. I ought to have said: 'When seven and ten are added, they make seventeen.' Everybody knows that, for when I said: 'If seven and ten are added, they make ten,' did not even the children laugh at me? Yet I do say that; I repeat it, and I am not ashamed. When you understand, you will not censure me in my computation, but you will take pleasure in my argument. The ten are the precepts of the Law, but I have also enumerated the seven co-operating graces of the Holy Spirit. When those seven are added, they make the precepts ten; when the Holy Spirit has been added, the Law is fulfilled. But, if the seven have not been added, the others do not make ten; they will exist in the letter, but the letter kills; knowledge makes a prevaricator. Let the Spirit be added and, by the help of God, not by your own endeavors, the Law is fulfilled.

Therefore, reflect upon this. Let us not be too anxious to attain to the Ten. 'For if justice is by the Law, then Christ died in vain.'[9] But, for what should we strive? For the seven? That is a kind of situation where we have the ability to act, but we do not know what we are doing. Therefore, let us attend to the seventeen. The Law commands and the Spirit helps; the Law co-operates with you so you may know what to do; the Spirit, that you may do it. Then, let us strive for the seventeen; let us add up the seventeen numbers; and we shall find ourselves in the 153. You already know this; I have often said it; I have often pointed it out. The numbers from one to four total ten, but only on condition that you add them all. Let two follow one; then add the two; now there are three. Let three follow two; now there are six. Let four follow three; now there are ten. Why am I exerting myself? I am saying what you already know. Add the other numbers and you will reach the total. When, by the successive

9 Gal. 2.21.

additions, you have come to number seventeen, you will reach 153. What does 'by successive additions' mean? By advancing, as it were, step by step, you will come to the right side. Obey me; do the addition for your own benefit.

Sermon 250

(1) The Lord Jesus, choosing the weak things of the world to confound the strong and gathering His Church from the whole face of the earth, did not begin with generals or senators, but with fishermen. For, if they had enjoyed any honors before their selection, they would have dared to attribute the Lord's choice to themselves, not to the grace of God. The Apostle disclosed this hidden plan of God, this plan of our Saviour, when he said: 'For consider your own call, brethren,' (these are the words of the Apostle) 'that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. But . . . the weak things of the world has God chosen to put to shame the strong, and the base things of the world and the despised has God chosen, and the things that are not as well as the things that are, to bring to naught the things that are; lest any flesh should pride itself before him.'[1] The Prophet, too, said this: 'Every valley shall be filled; every mountain and hill shall be made low; the surface of the fields shall be leveled.'[2] Finally, today both noble and ignoble, learned and unlearned, poor and rich alike draw near to the grace of God. In the reception of that grace, pride takes no precedence over humility, over the one who knows nothing and who possesses nothing. But what did He say to them? 'Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.'[3] If those fishermen had not preceded, who would have taken us? Now, however, any orator will

1 Cf. 1 Cor. 1.27-30.
2 Cf. Isa. 40.4.
3 Matt. 4.19.

be considered great if he is able to give a good explanation of what a fisherman wrote.

(2) Since, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ had chosen fishers of fish and had made them fishers of men, He wished, in those fishing experiences of theirs, to teach us something about the call of nations. Notice that the two fishing episodes have been differentiated by an essential distinction, the one being when the Lord chose men from the class of fishermen and made them His disciples, the other being the incident after the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ which we have just heard when the holy Gospel was read. One was before the Resurrection; the other, after the Resurrection. We ought to give careful consideration to what constituted the difference between the two fishing episodes, the means of our instruction being the recent account of the Gospel in which, having found the disciples fishing, the Lord said to them: 'Lower your nets.' They answered: 'The whole night through we have . . . taken nothing,' that is, we have labored in vain, 'but, behold, at thy word we will lower the nets.' They lowered the nets and took so great a haul that they filled two boats which were so weighed down with the large number of fish that they began to sink. Furthermore, because of the large number of fish, the nets were broken. Then it was He said to them: 'Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' Thereupon, leaving their nets and boats, they followed Christ.[4]

After the Resurrection, however, the Lord Christ used another fishing incident different from the one we have been considering. For, in the former He said: 'Lower the nets,' without specifying 'to the left' or 'to the right,' saying merely: 'Lower the nets.' For, if He had said 'to the left,' He would have indicated only the evil; if He had said 'to the right,' He would have indicated only the good. Therefore, because He said neither 'to the right' nor 'to the left,' both good and evil were included, in regard to whom the Gospel says

4 Luke 5.4,5,11.

in another passage that the master of a household, having prepared a feast, sent out his servants who brought in all whom they could find, both good and bad, and the marriage feast was filled with guests.[5] Now, the Church is like this feast, filled with the good and the bad. The Church is filled with a large number; but that large number is now overwhelming her and is beginning to bring shipwreck upon her. The multitude of those living evil lives so disturbs those living good lives that he who lives righteously looks upon himself as a fool when he considers those who live bad lives, especially since many guilty people are found to be fortunate in this world's goods and many guiltless people are found to be unfortunate. How one has to fear lest he be overwhelmed by shipwreck and sunk! How one has to fear, dearly beloved, lest he who lives righteously should say: 'How does it profit me to live uprightly? For, behold, he who lives a bad life is more highly honored than I. Of what use is it for me to live a good life? I am constantly running a risk; I live in fear of being ruined.'

In an endeavor to lift such a person from the depths, I shall say to him: 'Live a good life, you who are already doing so; do not grow weary; do not look back. Your Lord's promise is true when He says: "Whoever perseveres to the end, he shall be saved." '[6] You answer: 'I notice that the one who lives an evil life is fortunate.' You are mistaken; he is unfortunate, and he is more unfortunate to that very degree in which he seems to you to be more fortunate. His is an insanity which does not recognize its own misery. If you were to see a man in a high fever laughing, you would feel sorry for him as for one insane. What has been promised to you has not yet materialized. He who seems to you to be more fortunate is satisfied with visible and temporal joys; he is delighted with them. Yet, he did not bring them with him, nor will he take them away with him; he came into life

5 Cf. Matt. 22.1-11.
6 Matt. 24.13.

naked, and naked he will depart. From false joys he is destined to come to real sorrows. However, what has been promised to you has not yet materialized. Be patient, so that you may come to it; persevere, so that you may not cheat yourself by giving up, for God cannot deceive you.

Behold, I have spoken these few words so that your ships may not be overwhelmed. However, there was another more detestable aspect to that fishing incident, namely, that their nets were broken. The nets were broken; heresies were brought into existence. For, what else are schisms but rents? Thus, that first fishing must be so tolerated and endured that no one may be worn out by weariness, although it was written: 'A fainting hath taken hold of me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law.'[7] The ship which is laden with the multitude cries out as if it had a voice: 'A fainting hath taken hold of me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law.' Although you are hard pressed, see to it that you are not submerged. For the present, evil people must be tolerated, not separated. 'Mercy and judgment I sing to the Lord':[8] mercy is demanded first; judgment is exercised afterwards; the separation will be made at the judgment. Now let the good man hearken to me, so that he may become better; and let the evil hearken, so that he may become good, since this is the time for repentance, and not yet for judgment. Let us pass from that fishing which has joys mixed with tears, joys because the good are being gathered in, mixed with tears because the wicked are tolerated with difficulty.

(3) Let us turn our attention to the other later fishing incident; there let us be cheered and consoled. That incident took place after the Resurrection of the Lord because it indicated what the nature of the Church was going to be after His Resurrection. Behold, a direction is given to the disciples; the Lord who spoke before speaks now, but, whereas previously He told them what to lower, now He tells

7 Ps. 118.53.
8 Cf. Ps. 100.1.

them where to lower, that is, on the right side of the boat. Hence, those persons are now gathered in who will stand at the right side; those are now gathered in to whom these words are addressed: 'Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom.'[9] The disciples lower the nets and they draw in the haul. In the first case the number was not given; only the multitude was mentioned, but the exact number was not specified. Truly, now there is an innumerable multitude; they come, they enter, and they fill the churches. They who fill the churches fill the theatres, and do so without number, but they do not belong to the number destined for eternal life unless they change themselves while they are in this life. All do not make this change, do they? No, nor do all the good persevere. On that account the Scripture says: 'Whoever perseveres to the end, he shall be saved.'[10] And to those who are still wicked, it says: 'I desire not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live.'[11] Therefore, the number was not specified in the first instance, because an innumerable multitude was taken. The Psalmist says: 'I have declared and I have spoken: they are multiplied above number.'[12]

Now, however, on the right side they are not above number; they are 153, but they are great. In fact, it was on that account that the Evangelist said: 'And although they were so great, the net was not broken.'[13] For, in the future, there will be a gathering together of saints, but there will not be the divisions and separations of heretics; there will be peace and there will be perfect unity. There will be not one less, not one more; the number will be complete. But they are very few, indeed, if they number only 153. Far be it from me to say that there will be only that many from this nation; how many more will there be in the whole Church! In the

9 Matt. 25.34.
10 Matt. 24.13.
11 Cf. Ezech. 33.11.
12 Ps. 39.6.
13 Cf. John 21.12.

Apocalypse, John the Evangelist declares that such a great number of saints and of blessed ones was revealed in the eternal abode that no one could count them. He has made a statement to that effect.[14]

Nevertheless, all belong to that number, that is, to the 153. I desire to make that number still smaller. There are 153; let us make them fewer. Ten and seven make up those 153. Why ten? Why seven? Ten, because of the Law; seven, because of the Spirit. The form is sevenfold because of the perfection which is mentioned in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Prophet Isaias said: 'The holy Spirit shall rest upon him.' And when he had spoken of the Holy Spirit, he enumerated the seven virtues: 'The spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude' (making four), 'the spirit of knowledge and of godliness, the spirit of fear of the Lord.'[15] He began with wisdom and ended with fear; he spoke as one descending from the highest to the lowest, from wisdom to fear. But, from the lowest to the highest, from fear to wisdom—for 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'[16]—that is, the gift of grace, by means of that sevenfold virtue the Holy Spirit works in the chosen ones of God so that the Law may accomplish something there. For, if you take away the Spirit, how does the Law avail? It makes a prevaricator. On that account the Scripture says: 'The letter kills.'[17] The Law orders and you do not obey. It did not kill before the order was given to you, and, if foreknowledge held the sinner, it did not hold the prevaricator. Something is commanded, and you do not do it; something is forbidden, and you do it. Behold, 'the letter kills.'

The Law, moreover, has ten precepts. The first precept of the Law is that God alone, and no other, is to be wor-

14 Cf. Apoc. 7.9.
15 Cf. Isa. 11.2,3.
16 Ps. 110.10.
17 2 Cor. 3.6.

shiped; no idol is to be made. The second precept is: 'Thou shalt not take the name of thy God in vain.' The third precept is: 'Observe the sabbath day,' not in an earthly manner, as the Jews do, but spiritually. Those three precepts pertain to the love of God. However, because the Scripture says: 'On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets,'[18] that is, on the love of God and of the neighbor, and since you have heard what pertains to the love of God: unity, truth, and peace, consider what pertains to the love of one's neighbor. 'Honor thy father and thy mother': there you have the fourth precept. 'Thou shalt not commit adultery': there you have the fifth precept. 'Thou shalt not commit murder': there you have the sixth. 'Thou shalt not steal': there you have the seventh. 'Thou shalt not bear false witness': there you have the eighth. 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods': there you have the ninth. 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife': there you have the tenth.[19] He who says 'Thou shalt not covet' directs His blows at internal sins; He strikes at the interior; it is concupiscence that perpetrates the deed.

Behold, the Law exists in ten precepts, but what good is it if you, having learned the Law, do not observe it? You will be a prevaricator. In order that you may fulfill the precepts, help is necessary. Where do we get that help? From the Spirit. Hence, 'the letter kills but the Spirit gives life.' Let seven be added to ten, making seventeen. The entire multitude of the perfect is included in that number. Now I am accustomed to tell you how those numbers come to equal 153. Many of you already know this; nevertheless, the sermon must be given according to custom. Many have forgotten it; some have never heard it. Let those who have heard it and who have not forgotten it endure in patience, so that others may be reminded and instructed. When two persons

18 Matt. 22.37-40.
19 Cf. Exod. 20.1-17.

are walking along the road, one being rather quick and the other rather slow, it depends upon the quicker one not to leave his companion behind. He loses nothing who hears what he has already learned, and, for the very reason that he loses nothing, he ought to rejoice because one who did not know it is being taught. Count the seventeen numbers from one to seventeen in such a way that you add them all, and you will arrive at the number 153. What are you awaiting from me? Count for yourselves.

Sermon 251

(1) The fishing of our Saviour is our salvation. Moreover, we notice two fishing incidents in the holy Gospel of our Lord, that is, times when the nets were lowered at His word: one earlier when He chose the disciples, and the other when He had risen from the dead. That earlier fishing incident showed what the nature of the Church is now; the one which took place after the Resurrection of the Lord showed what the nature of the Church is going to be at the end of this world. Finally, in that earlier fishing, He bade the nets to be lowered without saying in what direction; He simply ordered them to be lowered. The disciples obeyed; there was no direction specifying 'to the right' nor was there any direction specifying 'to the left.' For the fish represented men. If, therefore, He had said 'to the right,' only the good were going to be included; if He had said 'to the left,' only the wicked would be taken. In fact, it was because both good and bad were going to be mixed together in the Church that the nets were lowered without any distinction, so that fish might be taken indiscriminately, signifying the mixture of the good and the bad. Furthermore, the statement is also made in the same passage that they took so many fish that the two boats were filled and were about to sink, that is,

they were pressed down to the sinking point.[1] As a matter of fact, those two boats did not sink, but they were in danger of doing so. Why were they in danger? Because of the large number of fish. In this way it was pointed out that, by reason of the large number of people which the Church would gather, her discipline would be endangered. Besides, a statement was added to the account of the fishing relating that the nets were broken on account of the large number of fish. What did broken nets signify except future schisms?

Therefore, three points were emphasized in that first fishing incident; the mixture of the good and the bad, the pressure of the crowds, and the severance of heretics. The mixture of the good and the bad [was indicated] because the nets were lowered neither to the right nor to the left; the pressure of the crowds, because so many were taken in that the boats were weighed down; the severance of heretics, because the number was so great that the nets were broken.

(2) Turn your attention now to the account of the other fishing incident which was read aloud today. For that happened after the Resurrection of the Lord to indicate what the nature of the Church would be after our resurrection. The Lord said: 'Cast the net to the right side'[2] Therefore, the number of those who will stand on His right hand was determined, for you remember that the Lord said that He will come with His angels, that all nations will be gathered before Him, that He will separate them as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, that He will set the sheep on His right side and the goats on the left, and that He will say to the sheep: 'Come, receive the kingdom,' and to the goats: 'Go into everlasting fire.'[3]

'Cast [the net] to the right side.' It is as if He were saying: 'Now that I have risen again, I wish to show what the Church will be at the resurrection of the dead.' 'Cast to the

1 Cf. Luke 5.1-7.
2 John 21.6.
3 Cf. Matt. 25.31-42.

right side.' The nets were cast to the right, and the disciples were not able to raise them because of the large number of fish. In the previous incident the word 'multitude' was used, but here a definite number was specified—both multitude and magnitude; there, however, the number was not mentioned. For now, before the resurrection takes place and before the good are separated from the evil, that which the Prophet predicted is being fulfilled, namely: 'I have declared and I have spoken.'[4] What is the meaning of: 'I have declared and I have spoken'? It signifies: 'I have lowered the nets.' And what then? 'They are multiplied above number.' There is a number; they exceed that number. The number pertains to the saints who are destined to reign with Christ. Now persons can enter the Church in excess of that number; they cannot so enter the kingdom of heaven.

(3) For this reason, I urge you to remove yourselves from the evil world of our day. For this reason, I urge you, who wish to live, not to imitate wicked Christians. Do not say: 'How is it? Is he not a believer, and is he intoxicated? How is it? Is he not a believer, and has he concubines? How is it? Is he not a believer, and does he daily perpetrate frauds? How is it? Is he not a believer, and does he consult astrologers?' Actually, you who now wish to be grain will then be found in the bread; you who now wish to be chaff will then be found in the great heap destined to be burned in a great conflagration.

What follows? He continues:[5] 'They hauled the nets to the shore.' Just now, when the Gospel was read aloud, you heard that Peter hauled the nets to the shore. When you hear 'shore,' understand the end of the sea; when you hear 'the end of the sea,' understand the end of the world. In the earlier fishing, the nets were not hauled to the shore; but the fish that were taken were poured into the boats. However, in this incident they hauled the nets to the shore. Hope for the

4 Ps. 39.6.
5 Cf. John 21.11.

end of the world. The end is going to come to the advantage of those on the right, to the disadvantage of those on the left. And how many fishes were there? 'They hauled in the nets which held one hundred fifty-three fishes.' In addition, the Evangelist notes a necessary detail: 'And though they were so great,' that is, so large, 'the net was not torn.' They will be great, but there will not be heresies; and it is for the very reason that they will be great that there will not be heresies. Who are the great? Read the words of the Lord Himself in the Gospel and you will find who are the great. For He says: 'I have not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill them.'[6]

(4) 'For amen I say to you that whoever does away with one of these least commandments, and so teaches men'—does away with and so teaches; 'does away with' by evil living, and 'so teaches' by good instruction—'shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.'[7] But in what kingdom of heaven? In the Church which exists now, because it is also called the kingdom of heaven. For, if the Church which gathers in the good and the bad were not also called the kingdom of heaven, the Lord Himself, speaking in a parable, would not have said: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea that gathered in fish of every kind.' But, behold what follows! 'The kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea'—*sagenae* are nets—'that gathers in fish of every kind.' What then? They drag them to the shore. (The Lord said this in the parable.) And when they have hauled the nets to the shore, they sit down and 'gather the good fish into vessels, but they throw away the bad.' Moreover the Lord explained what He declared. What is it He says? 'So will it be at the end of the world.' (Did you grasp the meaning of the word 'shore'?) He continued: 'The angels come and separate the wicked from among the just, and cast

6 Cf. Matt. 5.17.
7 Cf. Matt. 5.19.

them into the furnace of fire, where there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.'[8]

Nevertheless, the Church is called the kingdom of heaven. And, inasmuch as the sea has both good and bad fish swimming about at the same time, in that kingdom of heaven, that is, in the Church of our times, he is called least who teaches good things but does evil, because such people are there also. Yes, such a one is there; he is there in the kingdom of heaven, that is, in the Church as she exists in our times. He teaches good things; he does evil. He is a member, but he is a hireling. 'Amen I say to you,' the Lord says: 'they have received their reward.'[9] Such a person is of some good, for if they who teach good things and do evil were of no use, the Lord Himself would not have said to His people:[10] 'The Scribes and the Pharisees sit on the chair of Moses. Do what they say; do not do what they do.' Why? 'For they talk, but do nothing.'

(5) Therefore, let your Charity be attentive, for I desire to explain to you whom these great fishes represent: 'Whoever has done away with one of these least commandments, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.' He will be there, but he will be least. 'But whoever has carried them out and has so taught them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.' Behold, those are the great fishes taken on the right side. 'Whoever has carried them out and has so taught them': he has done good things; he has taught good things; he has not contradicted his own instructions by evil living, having a good tongue in spite of his evil life. Therefore, 'whoever has carried them out and has so taught them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.' And the Scripture continues: 'For I say to you that unless your justice exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.'[11] Now, how do you understand the

8 Cf. Matt. 13.47-51.
9 Matt. 6.2.
10 Cf. Matt. 23.2-4.
11 Cf. Matt. 5.19,20.

words 'kingdom of heaven' here? As that place of which the Scripture says: 'Come, blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom.'[12] 'Unless your justice exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees'— what does 'exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees' mean? Recall those Scribes and Pharisees who sit on the chair of Moses, of whom the Scripture says: 'Do what they say; do not do what they do; for they talk, but do nothing.'[13] Hence, the justice of the Pharisees is to talk and not to do. Let your justice exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees so that you may both speak well and live well.

(6) Now, therefore, what need is there of repeating the same statements about the number of the 153 fishes? You know all that. A gradually increasing number derives from ten and seven. Begin with one, go on to seventeen in such a way that you add all the intervening numbers, that is, add one to two, and it becomes three; add three, and it becomes six; add four, and it becomes ten. In this way add all the numbers up to seventeen, and the total is 153. Hence, our whole attention ought to be directed to nothing else except the significance of ten and seven, for therein lies the foundation of the 153.

Now, what is the significance of the ten and the seven? Understand the ten as in the Law. Ten precepts were given first; the Decalogue was inscribed by the finger of God on tablets. In the ten, understand the Law; in the seven, understand the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit is presented in sevenfold form. On that account, sanctification is not mentioned in the Law until the seventh day. God made light; the Scripture does not say: 'He sanctified it.' He made the firmament; it does not say: 'He sanctified the firmament.' He separated the sea from the earth; He ordered the earth to bud forth; it does not say: 'He sanctified it.' He made the moon and the stars; it does not say: 'He sanctified them.' He ordered living things that swim and fly to come forth

12 Cf. Matt. 25.34
13 Cf. Matt. 23.1-5.

from the waters; it does not say: 'He sanctified them.' He ordered four-footed animals and all creeping things to come forth from the earth; it does not say: 'He sanctified them.' He made man himself; it does not say: 'He sanctified him.'[14]

(7) We have reached the seventh day whereon He rested; and He sanctified it.[15] By His rest, God sanctified our rest. Therefore, our complete sanctification will be there where we shall rest eternally with Him. But why should God rest, for He was not wearied by His work? If you were to accomplish things by a mere word, you would not be tired; if you should give a direction and should find it carried out immediately, you would stay at rest, you would remain unexhausted. He spoke a few words by which He made all things, and was He suddenly wearied?

Hence, understand that the Law is represented by the ten; understand that the Holy Spirit is represented by the seven. Let the Spirit be joined to the Law, because, if you have received the Law, and if you lack the help of the Spirit, you do not fulfill what is of the Law, you do not carry out what is commanded you. Moreover, man under the Law is held as a prevaricator. Let the Spirit be added, let Him help: that which is commanded is accomplished. If the Spirit is absent, the letter kills you. Why does the letter kill you? Because it will make you a prevaricator. You cannot excuse yourself on the plea of ignorance since you have received the Law. Now, because you have learned what you should do, ignorance does not excuse you; the Spirit does not help you: therefore, you are ruined. But why does the Apostle say: 'The letter kills, but the spirit gives life'?[16] How does the Spirit give life? Because He causes the letter to be fulfilled so that it may not kill. The sanctified are those who fulfill the Law of God according to the gift of God. The Law can command; it cannot help. The Spirit is added as

14 Cf. Gen. 1.1-31.
15 Cf. Gen. 2.3.
16 2 Cor. 3.6.

a helper, and the commandment of God is fulfilled with joy and delight. Certainly many observe the Law from fear, but those who keep the Law from fear of punishment would prefer that what they fear did not exist. On the contrary, those who observe the Law through love of justice rejoice even in that respect because they do not consider it hostile to them.

(8) On that account the Lord says: 'Come to terms with thy opponent quickly while thou art with him on the way.'[17] Who is your opponent? The word of the Law. What is the way? This life. How is the word of the Law an opponent? It says: 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' and you wish to commit adultery. It says: 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods,' and you wish to steal the property of another. It says: 'Honor thy father and thy mother,' and you are insolent to your parents. The Law says: 'Do not bear false witness,' but you do not refrain from lying. When you see that the Law commands one thing and you do another, the Law is your opponent. You have a destructive adversary; let it not enter into intimacy with you; come to an agreement while you are on the way. God is near at hand to reconcile you. How does God reconcile you? By forgiving your sins, and by implanting justice so that your works may become good. Therefore, when you have come to terms with your opponent, that is, with the Decalogue of the Law through the Holy Spirit, you will arrive at the ten and the seven. When you have come to the ten and the seven, then the number will increase to 153. You will deserve to be crowned on the right side; do not remain in the left side to be condemned.

17 Matt. 5.25.

Sermon 252

(1) In the holy Scriptures our Lord Jesus Christ shows both the loftiness of His divinity and the mercy of His humanity in many different ways as He is accustomed to do, in mysteries and in symbols, so that those who ask may receive and those who seek may find, and so that to those who knock it may be opened.' For what was read today from the holy Gospel seeks an understanding heart, and gives rise to spiritual joy when it has been understood. Let your Holiness attend to the significance of what the Scripture says the Lord pointed out His disciples, in the way in which the Evangelist relates it.[2] For the disciples went out to fish and took nothing during the whole night. In the morning, moreover, the Lord appeared to them on the shore; He asked whether they had any fish to eat; they answered that they had nothing. He said to them: 'Cast the net to the right side and you will find them.' He who had come as if intending to buy bestowed so much for nothing, and He bestowed it from the sea as from His own creation—a great miracle indeed!

The disciples cast the nets immediately, and they took so great a haul that they were unable to draw in the nets because of the multitude of fishes. But, as a matter of fact, this miracle is not so wonderful if you notice who performed it, for He had already performed many greater miracles. Indeed, the fact that, after His Resurrection, He caused fishes to be caught was nothing great for Him who, before His Resurrection, had raised the dead. Hence, we ought to inquire into the interior message which this miracle brings to us. Certainly it was not without reason that He did not say in indefinite terms: 'Cast the nets,' but, rather: 'Cast the nets to the right side.' Furthermore, it was meaningful for the Evangelist to give the number of the fish. It was significant for him to say: 'And though there were so many, the nets were not torn.'

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1 Cf. Matt. 7.7.
2 Cf. John 21.6-11.

In this passage the Evangelist causes us to recall that on a previous occasion, when the Lord chose His disciples before His Passion, they likewise let down the nets at the bidding of the Master. Peter, John, and James were there. They cast the nets; they took innumerable fish. When one boat was filled, they sought help from the next boat, and the two boats were filled with fish (this was before the Resurrection), with so many, in fact, that the nets were breaking.[3] Why is no number given there? Why were the nets broken there, and not broken here? Why was it not said there that the nets were cast to the right side, and why did the Evangelist say here: 'Cast the nets to the right side'? Assuredly, it is not without design, for the Lord did not do things without purpose and intent. Christ is the Word of God; He speaks to men not only by words but also by deeds.

(2) Therefore, the problem as to what that diversity of action signifies is set before us and I shall discuss it with your Charity. As a matter of fact, those nets which were lowered on the previous occasion, which took an innumerable number of fishes weighing down the two boats and breaking the nets, were not cast to the right side; but neither is it said [that they were cast] to the left side. Now, the mystery of that first haul is fulfilled at this time, but the other is still a mystery, the one which He performed not without reason after His Resurrection when He was no more to die but was to live forever, not only in His divinity in respect to which He never died, but also in His body in which He deigned to die for us. Not without design, then, was the one incident before the Passion and the other after the Resurrection. In the former He said merely: 'Lower the nets,' specifying neither to the right nor to the left; in the latter, 'Cast to the right side.' In the first account there is no number, but only the fact that the catch was so great that it almost sank the two boats; the other account gives, in addition, the num-

3 Cf. Luke 5.1-8.

ber and size of the fish. Besides, the nets were broken in the one case; in the other, it was fitting for the Evangelist to say: 'And although there were so many, the nets were not broken.'

Do we not see, my brethren, that the Word of God is the net, that the world is the sea, and that all who believe are included within that net? If, by chance, anyone doubts that this is signified, let him consider that the Lord Himself declared in a parable what He indicated in this miracle. For He said: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea that gathered in fish of every kind. When it was filled, they hauled it out, and sitting down on the beach, they gathered the good fish into vessels, but threw away the bad. So will it be at the end of the world. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from among the just, and will cast them into the furnace of fire, where there will be the weeping, and the gnashing of teeth.'[4] Hence, He seems to consider the nets cast into the sea as a symbol of the faith. Is not this world a sea in which men devour one another like fishes? Do not small tempests and waves of temptation disturb this sea? Are the dangers of those sailing, that is, of those seeking their heavenly country on the wood of the cross, trifling? The parallel, therefore, is very evident.

(3) Let us see this only, my brethren (because the Resurrection of the Lord indicates a new life which we shall enjoy when this world will have passed away), let us see how the Word of God was first sent into this sea, that is, into this world. Into this world seething with waves, dangerous by reason of storms, and hazardous because of shipwrecks, the Word of God was sent, and He took so many that the two boats were filled. What are those two boats? The two peoples, for which, as for two walls, the Lord has become the chief cornerstone, so that in Himself He might join together the nations coming from different directions.[5] For

4 Matt. 13.47-51.
5 Cf. Eph. 2.11-22.

the nation of the Jews came from a far different tradition; but the nation of the Gentiles, from the worship of idols. The nation of the Jews came from circumcision; the nation of the Gentiles, from uncircumcision. They came from different directions, but they are united in the chief cornerstone, for walls never form a corner unless they come from different directions.

In Christ, therefore, the two nations, called from the Jews who were nearby and from the Gentiles who were from afar, have come to an agreement. For, because the Jews were near (in fact, they already worshiped the one God), notice what they did when they believed in Christ. They sold whatever they possessed and laid the price of their property at the feet of the Apostles. Then distribution was made to each according as anyone had need.[6] They were relieved of the baggage of worldly cares and, with unencumbered shoulders, they followed Christ. They submitted their neck to His gentle yoke and, embracing the cornerstone from nearby, they rested in peace. But the nation of the Gentiles came from afar; they arrived at the cornerstone and were established in peace. Hence, the two boats represent these two nations, Moreover, they were filled with so great a multitude of fishes that they were almost overwhelmed. Now, we read that among those of the Jews who accepted the faith there were earthly-minded people who brought distress upon the Church and who tried to prevent the Apostles from preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, saying that Christ was sent only to the circumcised, and that, if the Gentiles wished to receive the Gospel, they should be circumcised. For this reason when the Apostle Paul was sent to the Gentiles, he, even when he was preaching the truth,[7] became an object of offense to those of the Jewish nation who had embraced the faith. For the Apostle wished the nation of the Gentiles to touch the cornerstone where peace was established, in spite of the fact

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6 Cf. Acts 4.34-36.
7 Cf. Gal. 4.16.

that they came from a different background. Those earthly-minded men, therefore, who demanded circumcision, did not belong to the number of spiritual persons, nor did they yet see that, after all earthly mysteries had been set aside, He had come in whose light the shadows were put to flight. Nevertheless, because they caused disturbances, they, as it were, almost sank the boat because of their large number.

(4) Let us also consider the boat of the Gentiles. Let us see if so great a multitude has not been gathered into the Church that the grains of wheat are scarcely evident in so great an abundance of chaff. How many are robbers, how many drunkards, how many slanderers, how many frequenters of the theatres! Do not the same people fill the churches who fill the theatres? And very often, by their disturbances, they seek the same things in the churches as they are wont to look for in the theatres. And very often, if something of a spiritual nature is said or ordered, they resist and struggle against it, following the flesh and scorning the Holy Spirit. (Stephen accused the Jews also of this.[8]) Have we not experienced in this city, my brethren, as your Holiness will recall with me, with what great danger to us God has driven drunkenness from the basilica?[9] Has not the boat been almost submerged by the disturbance of the earthly-minded, and we along with it? How does this happen except because of the innumerable multitude of the fish?

Furthermore, it was also stated that the nets were broken. When nets have been broken, heresies and schisms have taken place. The nets, indeed, take in all persons; but unmanageable fishes, those who do not wish to come to the food of the Lord, push, break out, and leave whenever they can. To be sure, the nets are stretched out over the whole world; those who break out, however, do so in certain places. The Donatists[10] broke away in Africa, the Arians[11] broke away

8 Cf. Acts 7.51.
9 See St. Augustine, Letters 22 and 29.
10 See Sermon 197 note 6.
11 See Sermon 244 note 13.

in Egypt, the Photinians[12] broke away in Pannonia, the Cataphrygians[13] broke away in Phrygia, and the Manichaeans[14] in Persia. In how many places the net has been broken! Nevertheless, it brings to the shore those whom it includes. Certainly it brings some to shore, but when they break the net, do all the wicked leave?[15] Assuredly, people do not depart unless they are evil; both good and evil, however, remain. Otherwise, how is the net brought to the shore with both the good and bad fishes of which the Lord spoke in the parable?

(5) In fact, a threshing floor in operation bears a like resemblance. There is chaff and there is grain; nevertheless, those who look at the floor find it difficult to see anything but chaff. There is need of diligence in order to find grain in the chaff. But the winds blow over the entire threshing floor. And when it is being threshed, before it is

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12 See Sermon 244 note 14.

13 The name Cataphrygians was applied in the West to the members of the schismatical sect founded in Phrygia by the pseudo-prophet Montanus in the last half of the second century. With the assistance of two women, Priscilla and Maximilla, who, like him, claimed to have ecstasies in which they received communications from the Holy Spirit, Montanus strove to purify and reinvigorate the Church, and he prevailed upon many followers to live a more spiritual life in preparation for the second coming of Christ. With exaggerated rigorism, where the Christians praised chastity, Montanus condemned marriage or, at least, the remarriage of the widowed; where Christians relied on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Montanus claimed to be the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit; where Christians extolled martyrdom, Montanus commanded that it be sought; where Christians submitted to the hierarchical authority of their pastors, Montanus substituted personal inspiration and ecstasy. From their original endeavors to revive the primitive fervor of the Christians, the Montanists ended in arrogantly declaring that the Holy Spirit had descended upon Montanus in a fuller manner than upon the Apostles. Tertullian became one of their most ardent converts. In spite of condemnation and excommunication, the sect lingered until the fifth century, when the survivors submitted to the authority of the Church. Cf. Mourrett-Thompson, *History of the Catholic Church* (St. Louis 1931) I 306-331; M. L. Cozens, *A Handbook of Heresies* (London 1928) 23-26.

14 See Sermon 237 note 2.

15 The reading suggested in Migne, *PL* 38.1174, has been followed here: *Sed numquid cum rumpunt retia omnes mali exeunt?*

raised up to be tossed by the wind, does it not endure the winds then also? The wind blows and it raises the chaff from one side, so to speak; then it blows again and it lifts it to the other side. From any place whatever it lifts the chaff and tosses it into the hedge, among the thorns, and to any place at all. Furthermore, the wind cannot lift the grain; it lifts only the chaff. Nevertheless, when the blasts of wind, blowing from all directions, have taken away the chaff, will wheat alone remain on the threshing floor? Nothing leaves the floor except chaff; however, both chaff and grain remain. Where does all the chaff go? When the Lord will come bearing His winnowing fan in His hand, He will cleanse His threshing floor; He will gather the wheat into His barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.[16] Let your Holiness listen more attentively to what I am saying. For now and then the winds which lift the chaff from the threshing floor blow back again from the hedge where the chaff was caught and bring it back again to the floor. In the same way, for example, some man or other, enrolled in the Catholic Church, has suffered some trial of tribulation. He has seen that he could be helped in a wordly fashion by business with the Donatists, but they said to him: 'You will get no assistance unless you join us.' The wind has blown; it has cast him among thorns. If it should happen that he has worldly business again which can be concluded only in the Catholic Church, paying no attention to where he is, but regarding only where he will transact his business more advantageously, as if by a wind blowing from the other side of the hedge, he is brought back to the threshing floor of the Lord.

(6) Hence, my brethren, those who seek earthly advantages in the Church do not set before their minds what God promises, for here there are temptations, dangers, and difficulties but He promises eternal rest and the companionship of the holy angels after these temporal sufferings. Therefore,

16 Cf. Matt. 3.12.

by failing to set these promises before their minds and by desiring temporal advantages in the Church, they are chaff whether they are on the threshing floor or outside it. We neither rejoice to any great degree with them nor do we curry their favor by meaningless flattery; it is to their own advantage to become grain. Of course, there is this difference between real chaff and these men: the chaff does not have free will, but God has given free will to man. If man wishes, what was chaff yesterday becomes grain today; if he turns away from the word of God, man becomes chaff today. And grain is not to be sought there unless the final winnowing brings such persons to light.

(7) Now, my brethren, consider that blessed, mystical, and great Church which the 153 fishes represent. For we have heard, we know, and we see what its nature is now; what it will be like in the future, however, is disclosed to us only in prophecy; up to this time we have not an experimental knowledge of it. Nevertheless, we may rejoice about that future Church in spite of the fact that we do not yet see it in actuality. On the former occasion, the nets were lowered with no distinction as to the right or left, because they were intended to catch both the good and the bad. For, if the direction 'to the right' were given, the wicked would not be included; if the direction 'to the left' were given, the good would not be included. However, since the nets were destined to hold both the good and the bad, they were lowered here and there, without specific direction, and they took in both unjust and just, as I have pointed out. But then, in the future Church, in that holy Jerusalem where the hearts of all mortals will be open to view, there need be no fear that anyone who is wicked will enter into that Church, for no one will then conceal under the cloak of mortality the craftiness of a most vile heart. As a matter of fact, the Lord is coming soon. On that account, after His Resurrection when He is to die no more, He orders the nets to be cast on the right side. Then what the Apostle relates will

happen: 'When the Lord comes and brings to light the things hidden in darkness, He will make manifest the counsels of hearts; and then everyone will have his praise from God.'[17] At that time, consciences which have been veiled will be laid bare. Then, therefore, the good alone will be present; the wicked will be driven out. For the nets were cast to the right; they will not be able to take in the wicked.

(8) Why, therefore, were there 153 fishes? Will there be only that many saints? For, if we count, not all the faithful who have departed from the body in the midst of a good life, but the martyrs alone, if one day of suffering be considered a martyrdom, many thousands of men will be found crowned as saints. Hence, without a doubt, the significance of the 153 fishes must be investigated. What does the fifty signify? In fact, there is a mystery in that number, that is, in the fifty, because fifty taken three times equals 150. On this account, the number three appears in addition, so that we may be instructed as to the multiplier by which the 150 was produced, as if the direction were given: 'Divide the 150 into three parts.' But, if the number 152 were mentioned, guided by that number which is over and above [the 150] we would divide it into two parts of seventy-five, since seventy-five taken twice equals 150. Indeed, the addition of the number two would indicate a twofold division. If 156 were mentioned, we should have divided it into parts of twenty-five each so that there would be six parts. But now, because 153 was mentioned, we ought to divide that whole number, that is, 150, into three parts. Of this number, therefore, fifty is a third part. And so, our entire consideration must be fixed on the number fifty.

(9) Is it merely by chance that the days which we now celebrate are fifty in number? Indeed, it is not without good reason that the Church maintains this practice of long-standing tradition, so that the 'Alleluia' is said throughout these fifty days. For 'Alleluia' indicates praise of God; hence, to

17 Cf. 1 Cor. 4.5.

us who are laboring it signifies the attainment of our rest. For, when we come to that rest after this period of labor, our sole occupation will be the praise of God, our action there will be 'Alleluia.' What does 'Alleluia' mean? Praise God. Who would faultlessly praise God except the angels? They do not experience hunger or thirst or sickness or death. But we also have sung 'Alleluia.' It was sung here early in the morning, and when we were present, we sang 'Alleluia' a little while ago. A certain suggestion of the divine praise and of that peace reaches us, but, for the greater part, our mortality presses us down. We grow weary from speaking, and we wish to rest our limbs. If we were to say 'Alleluia' for a long period of time, the praise of God would become a burden for us because of the weight of our body. But, after the labors of this world, there will be an unceasing repetition of 'Alleluia.' What [are we to do], then, my brethren? Let us say it as often as we can so that we may merit to say it eternally. There 'Alleluia' will be our food; 'Alleluia' will be our drink; 'Alleluia' will be our peaceful action; 'Alleluia' will be our whole joy, that is, the praise of God. For who ceaselessly praises anything except the one who enjoys without distaste? Therefore, how much strength will there be in the mind, how much immortality and firmness in the body so that the application of the mind may not fail in contemplating God and the body may not succumb in constantly praising God?

(10) Why, therefore, do we celebrate this mystery [of the Resurrection] for fifty days? The Lord passed forty days with His disciples after the Resurrection, as the Acts of the Apostles testify. After forty days He ascended into heaven, and on the tenth day after His Ascension He sent the Holy Spirit. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles and all who had assembled into one place spoke with the gift of tongues and performed those wonderful deeds which we, reading and believing, accept when we utter the word of God with

great confidence.[18] The Lord passed forty days on earth with His disciples; He fasted for forty days before His Passion.[19] You find that no other person fasted for forty days except the Lord, and Moses, and Elias.[20] Because the Gospel draws its testimony from the Law and the Prophets,[21] the Lord [represents] as it were, the Gospel; Moses, the Law; and Elias, the Prophets. For that reason, too, when our Lord Jesus wished to manifest His glory on the mountain, He stood between Moses and Elias.[22] He Himself, in the middle, was resplendent in honor; the Law and the Prophets gave witness on the two sides.

Therefore, the number forty represents this period in which we labor in this world, because wisdom is temporarily portioned out to us here. For, in one way, the vision of wisdom is immortal, timeless; in another way, it is granted for a time. Indeed, the patriarchs lived here, and passed from hence; their dispensation was transitory. I do not say they live only for a time, for they live forever and they live with God. But the transmission of the word which was made through their instrumentality was temporal, for they do not speak here and now, but what they said was written down and is read in the course of time. The Prophets came at their particular time, and they, too, have departed. The Lord came in His own good time, and, as a matter of fact, the presence of His majesty never departed; present everywhere by His divinity, He never really withdrew but, as the Gospel says: 'He was in the world and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own and his own received him not.'[23] How was He here and how did He come unless He came in His humanity since He was already here in His divinity? Now, because

18 Cf. Acts 1-2.
19 Cf. Matt. 4.2.
20 Cf. Exod. 34.28; 3 Kings 19.8.
21 Cf. Rom. 3.21.
22 Cf. Matt. 17.2-4.
23 John 1.10-12.

He came in human form, He manifested His wisdom to us for a time; temporarily through the Law, temporarily through the Prophets, and temporarily through the writings of the Gospel.

Indeed, when time has passed, we shall see that it is Wisdom itself, just as it is, which has given us the number ten. For the number seven indicates creation, because God worked on six days, but He rested from His labor on the seventh day. The number three signifies the Creator, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Wisdom has been made perfect to subdue the creature to the Creator, to distinguish the Maker from the thing called into existence, and the Artist from the work of His hands. He who confuses the art with the Artisan knows neither the art nor the Artisan, but he who distinguishes is filled with wisdom. The number ten, then, is the fullness of wisdom. But, since the distribution is made in time, and since the number four is the indication of temporality, then ten multiplied by four gives the number forty. Besides, the year is differentiated in a fourfold manner by spring, summer, autumn, and winter, and this fourfold change is especially noticeable in time. The Scripture, too, mentions four winds; through four channels the Gospel which is preached in all time has spread; and that Church is truly catholic which has gained acceptance in the four corners of the world. Hence, in this way, ten becomes the number forty.

(11) Therefore, they fasted for forty days, signifying by that period of time that abstinence from the love of temporal things is necessary, for those constant fasts for so many days, that is, for forty days, indicate this. For that same reason, the people of Israel were led through the desert for forty years before they entered the Promised Land to rule over it. So we, too, in this life where there is the utmost anxiety, where there is fear, where there are dangers from temptations, are being led, as it were, through a desert by a temporal dispensation. But when we shall have made good use of these

days, forty in number, that is, when we shall have lived well in this temporal dispensation, walking according to the precepts of the Lord, we shall receive that tenfold reward of the faithful, inasmuch as when the Lord hired workmen for His vineyard He gave them ten coins in payment. To all—those who had been hired early in the morning, those at mid-day, and those at the close of day—to all He gave ten coins,[24] because, if anyone has been faithful from his earliest years, he is going to receive ten coins, no longer through a temporal dispensation, but because of a wisdom which distinguishes the Creator from the creature in eternal contemplation, so that he enjoys the Creator and offers praise to the Creator as from a creature. Moreover, another youth has believed, but has not been faithful from his early years; he, too, is going to receive ten coins. Besides, an old man has believed; led to the vineyard now at the close of the day, as it were at the eleventh hour, he is going to receive ten coins also. Thus, to the forty days which have been well spent add the reward of ten coins and you will have the number fifty which signifies the future Church where God will be praised eternally. But, because all have been called in the name of the Trinity to live good lives in these days forty in number, and to receive the ten coins, multiply that total of fifty by three and you have the number 150. Add the mystery of the Trinity and you have 153, the number of fishes found on the right side, in which number, however, countless thousands of saints are included. Hence, no evil persons will be cast out, because they will not be there; nor will the nets which are the bonds of unity and peace be broken by any schism.

(12) I think that this great mystery has been made sufficiently clear, but you know that it behooves us to work well during this period of forty days so that we may be able to praise the Lord during the fifty days. For that reason we spend these forty days before we keep vigil in labor, fasting,

24 Cf. Matt. 20.1-10.

and abstinence; for these are the marks of this present time. However, after the Resurrection of the Lord, because those days signify everlasting joy (they are not yet this, but they signify it, the whole future being enveloped in mystery, brethren, and not yet existing in actuality, for when the Pasch is celebrated, the Lord is not actually crucified, but in a certain way we show forth past events by a yearly celebration, so we indicate future conditions which do not exist), therefore, at the period of fifty days we relax our fasting, for the number of those days signifies future rest.

But, see to it, my brethren, lest, wishing to celebrate these days in a worldly fashion by excessive inebriation, as if this were permitted by the great relaxation, you may not merit to observe with the angels forever what these days foreshadow. In fact, if I have chided any intoxicated person, he will say to me: 'You told us that these days signify everlasting joy; you declared that this season foretells angelic and heavenly delight; should I not have done well by myself, then?' Would that it were well and not ill! For this season predicts joy for you if you have been the temple of God. However, if you fill the temple of God with the uncleanness of intoxication, the Apostle says to you: 'If anyone destroys the temple of God, him will God destroy.'[25] Let this be engraven in the hearts of your Holiness that it is better to be a man who knows less and who lives a better life, than to be a man who knows much but does not live a good life. Indeed, it is perfect and complete happiness for each one to understand readily and to live well; but if, by chance, both blessings are not possible, then it is better to live well than to understand quickly. For, he who lives a good life merits to understand more; he who lives a bad life will lose what he understands. Thus Scripture says: 'To everyone who has shall be given, but from him who does not have even that which he seems to have shall be taken away.'[26]

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25 1 Cor. 3.17.
26 Cf. Matt. 25.29.

Sermon 253

(1) The reading of the Gospel of St. John, which is called the Gospel according to John, was finished today with those words in which he told how the Lord appeared to His disciples after the Resurrection. After the Lord had conquered death, therefore, He, now alive again, accosted that headstrong denier, the Apostle Peter, and addressed him,[1] saying: 'Simon, son of John (for so Peter was called) dost thou love me?' Peter answered what was in his heart. Now, if Peter answered what was in his heart, why did the Lord who saw his heart question him? Indeed, Peter himself also wondered at this, and listened with a certain amount of anxiety to the question of the Lord who, he realized, knew the answer. The Lord said once: 'Dost thou love me?' Peter answered: 'I love thee, Lord; thou knowest it.' And again to the question: 'Dost thou love me?' Peter replied: 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.' For the third time, the Lord asked: 'Dost thou love me?' Peter was grieved. Why are you grieved, Peter, at making this threefold declaration of your love? Have you forgotten your thrice-repeated fear? Let the Lord question you; He who interrogates you is a Physician; what He asks pertains to your well-being. Do not be overcome with anxiety. Wait; let the number of your declarations of love be completed so that it may cancel the number of your denials.

In each instance, however, in each instance, that is, in each part of the threefold interrogation, the Lord commends His flock to Peter as he reiterates his love, saying: 'Feed my lambs; feed my sheep,' as if He meant: 'What return are you making to Me in proof of your love? Show your love in regard to My sheep. What are you giving to Me in proof of your love for Me, since I have given you the opportunity to love Me? But, as a matter of fact, you have a chance to

1 Cf. John 21.15-18.

show your love for Me; you have an occasion where you may give expression to it: 'Feed my lambs.'

(2) Moreover, in the following passage, the Lord indicated how the lambs of the Lord were to be fed, and with what great love sheep purchased at so great a price were to be nurtured. For after Peter, upon the attainment of the required limit of the threefold response, had acknowledged that he was a lover of the Lord, and after the Lord's sheep had been entrusted to his keeping, he learned about his future suffering. Hereupon the Lord declared that His sheep were to be so loved that those to whom He entrusted them should be ready to die for them. Thus the same writer, John, says in his Epistle: 'Just as Christ laid down his life for us, so we ought to lay down our life for the brethren.'[2]

Hence, when Peter had previously said: 'I will lay down my life for thee,'[3] he had answered the Lord with a certain proud presumption; he had not yet received the strength with which to carry out that promise. But now, at this moment, he is so filled with love that he is able to do so. Therefore, to the Lord's question: 'Dost thou love me?' he answers: 'I do love thee,' because nothing but love fulfills such a promise. Then, what was it, Peter, that you feared when you denied? All that you feared was death. He, whom you saw dead, now living speaks to you. Do not fear death any longer; what you feared has been conquered by the Lord. He hung upon the cross; He was affixed to it with nails; He breathed forth His spirit; He was pierced with a lance; He was placed in the tomb. When you denied, you feared all this; you feared that you would suffer this; and, by fearing death, you denied life. Understand this now: when you feared to die, then you died. (For he, Peter, died by denying; but he rose again by his weeping.)

What was it that the Lord then said to Peter when He

2 Cf. 1 John 3.16.
3 John 13.37.

recognized his ripeness for suffering?[4] 'Follow me.' For if you remember—in truth, because those who have read it do remember, let those who do not remember it be reminded and let those who have not read it be enlightened—if you remember, when Peter had said: 'I shall follow thee wheresoever thou shalt go,' the Lord answered: 'Thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow later.' 'Thou canst not now,' He said; 'you promise, but I see your strength. I look into the depths of your heart, and I disclose the truth to one who is weak. You cannot follow Me now.' But that pronouncement of the Physician is not a mark of despair, for He went on to say: 'But thou shalt follow later. Then you will be strong, and you will follow Me.' Now, because He sees what is transpiring in the heart of His disciple, and because He sees that He has given the gift of His love to the soul of that disciple, the Lord says to him: 'Follow me. As a matter of fact, I did say formerly: "Thou canst not follow now," but now I say: "Follow me." '

(3) However, there has arisen a certain question which must not be passed over in silence. When the Lord had said to Peter: 'Follow me,' Peter, looking back at the disciple whom Jesus loved, that is, at John who wrote this Gospel, said to the Lord: 'Lord, and what of this man? I know that you love him. How is that I shall follow and he shall not?' But the Lord answered: 'So I wish him to remain until I come. . . . Do thou follow me.'[5] In truth, that very Evangelist who wrote this account and of whom the Lord said: 'I wish him to remain until I come,' went on to add his own commentary in the Gospel, saying that, because of this statement, the report 'went abroad among the brethren that that disciple was not to die.' And, to remove that opinion, he added: 'But he did not say that he was not to die. On the contrary, he only said: "So I wish him to remain until I come. . . .

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4 Cf. John 21.19-21;13.36.

5 Cf. John 21.22. The word *sic* of the text is translated here and elsewhere as 'so,' instead of as 'if' as in the Confraternity Edition.

Do thou follow me." '[6] Therefore, in the following words John himself denied the false report according to which the people thought that he, John, was not going to die, and lest it should be believed, he added: 'The Lord did not say this, but He make this other statement.' However, John did not disclose why the Lord had spoken thus. Instead, he left that problem to us to see if, in response to our knocking, the door might be opened to us.

(4) So far as the Lord designs to grant [light] to me, so far as it appears to me (yet better minds may see it in a better light) I think that this problem may be solved in two ways: either the Lord said what He did say about the suffering of Peter, or He spoke about the Gospel of the Evangelist John. So far as the suffering of Peter is concerned, the words 'Follow me' would mean: 'Suffer for Me; suffer what I have suffered.' For Christ was crucified; Peter, too, was crucified. He experienced the nails; he experienced the tortures. John, however, suffered none of these things. On that account, the words, 'So I wish him to remain,' signify 'Let him sleep and let him wait for Me without wounds and without suffering. Do thou follow Me; do thou suffer what I have suffered. I shed My blood for thee; do thou shed thy blood for Me.' Hence, one way in which we can interpret the passage, 'So I wish him to remain until I come. . . . Do thou follow me,' is this: 'I do not wish him to suffer; do thou endure the suffering.'

However, according to the Gospel of John, this interpretation seems to me to be indicated: that Peter wrote about the Lord, but others wrote, also; their writings, however, were concerned more with the humanity of the Lord. As a matter of fact, the Lord Christ is both God and Man. What is man? Soul and body. What, then, is Christ? The Word, a soul, and a body. But of what sort is His soul, since beasts also have souls? The Word, a rational soul and a body—Christ is all this. In the Epistles of Peter there is a little

6 Cf. John 21.23.

about the divinity of Christ; more, however, is disclosed in the Gospel of John.[7] He has said: 'In the beginning was the Word.' He has passed beyond the clouds; he has passed beyond the stars; he has passed beyond the angels; he has passed beyond all creation; he has reached the Word by whom all things were made. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him.' Who sees this? Who thinks about this? Who would worthily undertake this? Who would worthily pronounce upon this? Then at last, when Christ has come, will this passage be understood clearly. 'So I wish him to remain until I come.' I have explained it to the best of my ability; He Himself can inspire a more satisfactory solution in your hearts.

Sermon 254[1]

(1) Thus there exist, my brethren, thus there exist the misery of our present condition and the mercy of God so that the time of joy is preceded by the time of sorrow; that is, so that the time of sorrow comes first and that of joy later; so that the time of labor is first and that of rest later; so that the time of misfortune is first and that of good fortune later. So there exist now, as I have said, the misery of our present condition and the divine mercy. For our sins have brought upon us the time of sorrow, of labor, and of misery; the time of joy, of rest, and of good fortune will come, not from our merits, but from the grace of our Saviour. We deserve one thing; we hope for another. We deserve evils; we hope for blessings. The mercy of Him who created us brings this about.

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7 Cf. John 1.1-4.

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1 The text followed here is that given in D. C. Lambot, 'Sancti Aurelii Augustini Sermones Selecti Duodeviginti,' *Stromata Patristica et Mediaevalia* 1 (1950) 81-87.

(2) Nevertheless, in the time of our misery and, as the Scripture says, in the days of our vanity,[2] we ought to understand the cause of that sadness. For, in a certain way, sadness is like dung. Dung, not consigned to its proper place, is filth; dung, not consigned to its proper place, makes a house unclean; but, in its place, it makes a field fertile. Notice the place provided for dung by the farmer. Now, the Apostle says: 'And who can gladden me, save the very one who is grieved by me?'[3] And, in another passage, he says: 'The sorrow that is according to God produces repentance that tends to salvation of which one does not repent.'[4] He who is sad according to God is sad in penitence for his sins; sorrow because of one's own iniquity produces justice. First, let what you are displease you so that you may be able to be what you are not. 'The sadness that is according to God produces repentance that tends to salvation of which one does not repent.' He says: 'repentance that tends to salvation.' What sort of salvation? That of which one does not repent. What does that mean? One of which you do not repent at any time. For we have had a life of which we ought to have repented; we have had a life calculated to inspire repentance. But we cannot come to that life of which one does not repent except through penitence for an evil life. Will you, my brethren, as I had begun to say, ever find dung in a sifted mass of wheat? Nevertheless, the wheat arrives at that lustre, at that fine an beautiful appearance, by means of dung; the foulness was the path to a beautiful result.

(3) Moreover, in the Gospel the Lord rightly said of a certain barren tree:[5] 'Behold for three years now I have come to this tree, and I find no fruit on it I shall cut it down, that it may not encumber my field.' The husbandman interceded; he interceded when the ax was already threatening

2 Cf. Eccle. 7.16.
3 2 Cor. 2.2,7.
4 Cf. 2 Cor. 7.10.
5 Cf. Luke 13.6-10.

and almost striking the fruitless roots; the husbandman interceded, just as Moses interceded with God, saying: 'Sir, let it alone this year also. I am digging around it and I am using a quantity of dung. If it bears fruit, all well and good; if not, thou shalt cut it down.' That tree represents the human race. The Lord came to see that tree in the time of the patriarchs, as it were, in the first year. He came to see it again in the time of the Law and the Prophets, as it were, in the second year. Behold, in the Gospel the third year dawned for it. Now it was fitting for it to be, as it were, cut down; mercy, however, pleads with Mercy. For He who wished to manifest Himself as merciful placed an intercessor before Himself, saying: 'Let it alone this year also; let it be dug up roundabout (the ditch is a sign of humility); let a quantity of dung be used; truly, it may perchance bear fruit.' In reality, because it bears fruit, and in part does not bear fruit, its Master will come and will separate it.[6] What does 'he will separate it 'mean? That there are good, and there are evil; now, however, they are mixed together in one crowd, as it were, in one Body.

(4) Therefore, my brethren, as I have said before, a suitable place for dung helps to produce fruit, but an unsuitable place leads to uncleanness. Someone or other is sad; I have come upon this sad person; I see the dung; I examine the place. Tell me, my friend, why are you sad? He says: 'I have lost my money.' The place is unclean; there is no fruit. Let him hear the Apostle: 'The sorrow that is according to the world produces death.'[7] Not only is there no fruit, but there is great danger. The outcome is the same of other things pertaining to worldly joys, things which it would take too long to mention. I see another person sorrowing, moaning, and weeping; I see much dung and there I examine the place. Although I have seen him sad and weeping, I have also seen him praying. Some good impression or

6 Cf. Luke 12.46; Matt. 24.51.
7 2 Cor. 7.10.

other had brought to my attention this man who was sad, moaning, weeping, and praying; but still I examine the place. For, what if that man who is praying and groaning is also with much weeping imploring death for his enemies? Moreover it is thus, even thus that he now asks; he now begs; he now prays. The place is unclean; there is no fruit. What we find in Scripture goes further: the man begs that his enemy may die and he falls under the curse of Judas: 'May his prayer be turned to sin.'[8] I have looked at still another person groaning, weeping, and praying; I recognize the dung and I examine the place. Moreover, I have directed my ear to this man's prayer, and I have heard him say: 'O Lord, be thou merciful to me: heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.'[9] He laments his sin; I recognize the field; I look for fruit. Thanks be to God! The dung is in account let us grieve; let us be sad because of this state of affairs.
a good place; it is not useless there; it produces fruit. This is truly the time of fruitful sorrow, so that we may lament the state of our mortality, the abundance of temptations, the stealthy attacks of sinners, the clash of desires, the conflicts of passions ever rebelling against good thoughts. On this

(5) The forty days before Easter signify this time of our misery and of our sorrow, if there is anyone who has such hope for sorrow; but the time of joy which will come later, of rest, of happiness, of eternal life, of a kingdom without end which does not yet exist, that time is signified by these fifty days on which praises are sung to God. For two periods are observed by us: the one before the Resurrection of the Lord, the other after the Resurrection of the Lord; the one in the midst of which we are now, the other in which we hope to be in the future. We both observe and possess the time of sorrow which the forty days of Lent symbolize; the time of joy, of rest, and of power which those [fifty] days

8 Ps. 108.7.
9 Ps. 40.5.

signify we observe, indeed, by our 'Alleluias' but we do not yet possess the praises; now, however, you do breathe forth the 'Alleluia'. What does 'Alleluia' mean? Praise God. Wherefore, throughout these days after the Resurrection the praises of God are celebrated in the church, because after our Resurrection we shall have perpetual praise. The Passion of our Lord signifies our time, the period in which we weep here. Scourges, bonds, insults, spittle, a crown of thorns, wine mixed with gall, vinegar on a sponge, revilings, abuse, finally the cross itself, the sacred limbs hanging on the wood [of the cross]—what do all these sufferings signify for us except the period through which we are passing, the time of sorrow, the time of mortality, the time of trial? Hence, it is a foul period; but, let that foulness of the dung be in the field, not in the house. Let grief arise on account of one's sins, not on account of frustrated desires. A foul period, if used to advantage, is a fertile period. What has a more unpleasant odor than a field which has been covered with dung? It was a beautiful field before it received this load of manure; it was first reduced to foulness so that it might come to fertility. Foulness, therefore, is a mark of this time; let that foulness, however, be for us a period of fertility. Furthermore, let us see with the Prophet who says: 'We have seen him.' What is He like? 'There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness.'[10] Why is this? Ask another Prophet. 'They have numbered all my bones.'[11] They have numbered His bones as He hung upon the cross. A foul sight, the sight of one crucified; but that foulness produced beauty. What beauty? That of the Resurrection, because He is 'beautiful above the sons of men.'[12]

(6) Therefore, my brethren, let us praise the Lord, because we hold fast to His faithful promises; we have not yet received [their fulfillment]. Do you consider it a trifling matter to hold Him as One who has made a promise so that

10 Isa. 53.2.
11 Ps. 21.18.
12 Ps. 44.3.

we may prove that He is our Debtor? God, the Promiser, has become our Debtor; He has become our Debtor because of His own goodness, not because of any just claim on our part. What have we given to Him that we should hold Him as our Debtor? Is it, by chance, what you have heard in the psalm:[13] 'What shall I render to the Lord?' In the first place, when the Psalmist says: 'What shall I render to the Lord?' the words are those of a debtor, not of one demanding payment of a debt. He has asked the leading question: 'What shall I render to the Lord?' What is the meaning of 'What shall I render'? It means: 'What shall I pay back?' For what? 'For all the things that he hath rendered to me.' What has He given to you? 'At first I was nothing, and He made me; I had been lost, and He sought me out; seeking me, He found me; when I was captive, He redeemed me; having purchased me, He freed me; from being a slave, He made me His brother. "What shall I render to the Lord?" ' You have nothing which you can give Him. Since you look for everything from Him, what have you to give? But wait; the Psalmist wishes to indicate something when he asks: 'What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that he hath rendered to me?' Searching on all sides for what he can give, he, as it were, finds something. What does he find? 'I will take the chalice of salvation.' You have been planning to give; but, up to the present, you have been seeking to receive. Think this over, I ask you. If you are still seeking to receive, you will still be a debtor. When will you be a giver? If, therefore, you will always be a debtor, when will you pay back? You will find nothing which you may pay back; you will possess nothing except what He has given.

(7) Consider that, when you said: 'What shall I render?' the question belongs to what you previously said: 'Every man is a liar.'[14] For, whoever has wished to say that he renders something to God is a liar. All things must be hoped

13 Ps. 115.12,13.
14 Ps. 115.11.

for from the Lord; from ourselves, without Him, we possess nothing except, perhaps, sin and lying because he who utters a lie speaks of himself. Truly, man abounds in a profusion of what is his own; he certainly possesses untruthfulness, and his heart is a treasury of lies. He lies as much as he can; he does not fail in this respect. He makes up whatever he can;[15] he lies about whatever he can. Why? Because what he has without cost, he has from himself; he has not paid for it. However, when he comes to the truth, if he wishes to be truthful, it will not come from himself. Of himself, Peter was untruthful. When was he untruthful? The Lord foretold His Passion to us and Peter said: 'Far be it from thee; this will not happen.' 'Every man is a liar.' How is he a liar? Hear the Lord Himself: 'Thou dost not mind the things of God, but those of men.' But Peter was truthful, too. When? 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' How does that truth come from an untruthful man? Behold, a man says: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Who says this? Peter. What was Peter? A man who spoke the truth? But, assuredly, 'every man is a liar.' Behold, behold his words; behold the truth of his words; how, then, is this: 'Every man is a liar'? Hear how every man is a liar, but Peter is truthful because he does not speak of himself. Hence, 'every man is a liar' because lying is of his own nature. How, then, was Peter truthful? Hear Truth Himself: 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona.' Why blessed? Is it of yourself, Peter? Not at all! 'For flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven.'[16]

(8) Hence, my dearly beloved, let us praise the Lord who is in heaven; let us praise God; let us say: 'Alleluia.' During these days let us symbolize the unending day; let us symbolize the place of our immortality, the time of our im-

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15 I have adopted here the variant reading 'fingit' of codices T and K as being in harmony with the verbs which stand in parallel construction.

16 Cf. Matt. 16.22,23,16,17.

mortality; let us hasten to our eternal home. 'Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they shall praise thee for ever and ever.'[17] The Law says so; the Scripture says so; Truth says so. We are destined to come to the house of God which is in heaven. There we shall praise God, not for fifty days, but as it is written, 'for ever and ever.' We shall see; we shall love; we shall praise. What we see will not fail; what we love will not perish; nor will what we praise be silent. Everything will be everlasting; it will be without end. Let us give praise; let us give praise, but not merely by words; let us also give praise by our actions. Let our speech give praise, and let our life give praise; let not our life be in conflict with our speech but let them both display infinite charity.

Sermon 255[1]

(1) Since the Lord has wished me to observe your Charity in the 'Alleluia,' I ought to say a word to you concerning the 'Alleluia.' I trust I will not weary you if I mention what you know already: that we say 'Alleluia' daily and that we take delight in it daily. For you know that 'Alleluia' means 'Praise God,' and, by this expression, we, agreeing in speech and thought, exhort one another to praise God. Only the man who displeases God in no respect praises Him in security. Furthermore, in this time of our journeying we say 'Alleluia' for solace on our way, and now the 'Alleluia' is the song of the traveler for us; but we are advancing through a laborious path to a peaceful country where all our activities will be laid aside, and nothing will remain for us except the 'Alleluia.'

(2) Mary chose this most delightful part for herself: she remained at leisure; she continued to learn; she continued to

17 Cf. Ps. 83.5.

1 It is possible that St. Augustine delivered this sermon when he was attending the synod held in Carthage against the Pelagians in 418.

praise. But Martha, her sister, was busy about many things. She was accomplishing what was, indeed, necessary, but not lasting; she was doing the work of the journey, but not that of her homeland; she was performing the task of the traveler, of one not yet in possession. In fact she, as hostess, had received the Lord and those who were with Him. Besides, the Lord had a body, and just as He deigned to assume a physical body for our sake, so He deigned to be hungry and thirsty. And, as a result of the fact that He deigned to be hungry and thirsty, He condescended to be fed by those whom He Himself enriched; He condescended to be received as a guest, not from need, but from favor.

Therefore, Martha busied herself with what pertained to satisfying the needs of those who were hungry and thirsty; with solicitous activity she prepared what the Holy of Holies and His saints would eat and drink in her house.[2] It was an important but transitory work. It will not always be necessary to eat and drink, will it? When we cleave to the most pure and perfect Goodness, there will be no reason for serving necessity. We shall be blessed, needing no one; possessing much, seeking nothing. And what is it that we shall possess which will make it unnecessary to seek anything? I have already told you: you believe now, afterwards you will see. Therefore, because I have used the words 'possessing much and seeking nothing, that is, having need of no one,' what is that which we shall have? What will God give to those who serve Him, to those who worship Him, to those who believe in Him, to those who hope in Him, to those who love Him?

(3) Indeed, we see what great things He gives in this time to those who do not trust in Him, to those who have ceased to hope in Him, to those who have turned away from Him, to those who blaspheme Him; we see what great gifts He lavishes upon these people. For, in the first place, health

2 Cf. Luke 10.38-42.

is from Him, health which is so dear that it never becomes burdensome. What does a poor man lack when he has health? No matter what a rich man possesses, what is of any use to him if he does not have health? From Him, then, is this exceedingly great gift, our health—from the Lord our God whom we worship, from the true God in whom we believe, in whom we hope, and whom we love. Nevertheless, though health is so great a gift, see how He gives it to good and bad alike, to those who blaspheme Him as well as to those who worship Him. But what am I to say? Both classes are men; even a wicked man is better than any beast. Yet, He gives health to beasts of burden and to dragons; He even bestows health on flies and little worms; He who created all things preserves all things. Therefore, to pass over other details, because we find nothing superior to health, not only does God give this gift to men but also to beasts, as the Psalmist says: 'Men and beasts thou wilt preserve, O Lord; as thy mercy has been multiplied, O God.'[3] For, because Thou art God, Thou art of such a nature that Thy goodness does not remain fixed upon the highest nor does it desert the lowest; it reaches from the angels even to the last and most insignificant living things. For wisdom, reaching mightily, comes from end to end and orders all things sweetly.[4] In the distribution of her sweetness, health is pleasing to all.

(4) Since, then, the Lord gives so great a blessing to both good and bad, to men and to beasts, what is there, my brethren, that He reserves for the good? For the Psalmist said: 'Men and beasts thou wilt preserve, O Lord, as thy mercy hath been multiplied, O God.' And then he added: 'But the children of men.' Who are they? It is as if some are men, of whom he had spoken a little while before when he said: 'Men and beasts thou wilt preserve, O Lord,' and some are the children of men. But, as a matter of fact, are men something different from the children of men, and are the children of men something different from men? What,

3 Cf. Ps. 35.7,8.
4 Cf. Wisd. 8.1.

then, does that distinction signify unless, perchance, that men belong to man, but the children of men to the Son of Man; men to man, and the children of men to the Son of Man. For there is a certain man who was not the son of man. As a matter of fact, he who was created first was a man, but he was not the son of man. What, therefore, has come to us through man and what through the Son of Man? I remind you of what came through man, and I [do so] using the words of the Apostle: 'Through one man sin entered into the world and through sin death, and thus death has passed unto all men because all have sinned.'[5] Behold what man has passed on to us; behold what we drink in from our parent and digest with difficulty. If this [comes] through man, what comes to us through the Son of Man? The Apostle says:[6] 'He did not spare his own Son.' If He 'did not spare his own Son but has delivered him for us all, how will he not give us all things along with him?' Likewise, 'just as by the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted just.' Through man, therefore, sin came; through Christ, justice. Hence, all sinners belong to man; all the just, to the Son of Man. Then why do you wonder because sinners, because the wicked, because the unjust, because those who despise God, those turned away from God, those who love the world and embrace iniquity, those who hold the truth in abhorrence, that is, men who belong to man, why do you wonder because they possess this health when you hear the Psalmist say: 'Men and beasts thou wilt preserve, O Lord'? So that men might not be lifted up with pride because they possess health for a time, beasts were included with them. What reason is there for you to rejoice, then, O man? Is not health of body common to you along with your donkey, with your hen, with any living

5 Rom. 5.12.
6 Cf. Rom. 8.32; 5.19.

creature in your house, even with the sparrows? Is not health of body shared by you with all these creatures?

(5) Therefore, seek out what was promised to the children of men and hear what follows: 'But the children of men shall put their trust under the covert of thy wings.'[7] Meanwhile they will hope as long as they are on the way. 'But the children of men shall put their trust under the covert of thy wings.' 'For in hope were we saved.'[8] This hope under the covert of the wings of God does not belong to beasts as well as to men. And behold, this hope allures us, nourishes us, strengthens us, and consoles us in this troublesome life; in this hope we sing 'Alleluia.'

Behold what great joy hope contains! What will this joy be? Do you seek what it will be? Hear what follows: 'They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house.'[9] There is hope of this joy. We are thirsty and hungry; we need to be fed. However, hunger exists only on the way; there is plenty in the homeland. When shall we be filled? 'I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear.'[10] Now, however, the glory of our God, the glory of our Christ lies hidden; and with it our glory has been hidden, also. But 'when Christ, your life, shall appear, then you too will appear along with him in glory.'[11] Then there will be 'Alleluia' in reality; now, only in hope. Hope sings it, and love sings it now; love will also sing it then, but it will be a satisfied love while now it is a hungry love. In truth, what is the 'Alleluia,' my brethren? I have told you that it is the praise of God. Behold, now you hear the word of God and you are made happy in hearing it, and in your joy you give praise. If you thus love the dew, how will you love the fountain itself? As a matter of fact, what belching is to a disordered stomach, praise is to a full heart. Indeed, if we give praise because we believe,

7 Ps. 35.8.
8 Rom. 8.24.
9 Ps. 35.9.
10 Ps. 16.15.
11 Col. 3.4.

how will we give praise when we have seen? Behold what Mary chose for herself; but she only pointed to that life, she did not yet possess it.

(6) There are two lives: one associated with happiness; the other, with necessity. The one which belongs to necessity is troublesome; the one which belongs to happiness, delightful. But go within; do not seek happiness outside; do not be puffed up on account of it, and thus be unable to enter through the narrow way. Behold how Mary saw the Lord in His humanity and heard the Lord by means of His humanity, as if through a veil, just as you heard when the Epistle to the Hebrews was read.[12] But there will be no veil when we see Him face to face.

Therefore, Mary remained seated, that is, she was at leisure, and she listened, and she gave praise. Martha, however, was busy with much serving. And the Lord said to her: 'Martha, Martha, thou art engrossed with many things; and yet only one thing is necessary.'[13] Only one thing is needful; many things will not be so. Before we come to the one thing, we stand in need of many things. Let the one thing occupy us, so that the many things may not distract and sever us from the one. Because the Apostle had not yet attained the one thing necessary, he said:[14] 'I do not consider that I have laid hold of it already. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind, I strain forward toward it.' He is not turned aside from it, but straining forward toward it. For, one thing stretches out; it does not divide. Many things separate into parts; one thing stretches forward. And how long does it continue to stretch? As long as we are here. When we have arrived, it contracts and stretches out no longer. 'But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind, I strain forward to what is before, according to my intention.' Behold a stretching forward, not a separation! 'According

12 Cf. Heb. 10.20.
13 Cf. Luke 10.41.
14 Phil. 3.13-15.

to my intention, I press on to the prize of God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.' The order of the words is: 'But I follow the one thing.'

Then, therefore, we shall come and we shall enjoy the one thing; but the one thing will be all things to us. For what was it I said, my brethren, when I began to speak? What is that sufficiency which we shall possess when we shall have no need? What is that sufficiency which we shall possess? I had intended to say: 'What will God give to us which He will not give to them?' 'Let the wicked be taken away that he may not see the glory of God.'[15] Hence, God will give His glory to us so that we may enjoy it; and the wicked will be taken away that he may not see the glory of God. God Himself will be the entire sufficiency which we shall possess as our own. Greedy one, what did you seek to gain? What does anyone, for whom God is not enough, seek from God?

(7) But when the statement is made that we shall possess God and that we shall be content with Him alone, that in fact we shall be so delighted with Him alone that we shall seek nothing else, because we shall take pleasure in Him alone and we shall, in turn, enjoy Him in ourselves (for what are we if we do not possess God, or what else besides God ought we to love in ourselves either because we possess Him or in order to possess Him?)—when, therefore, the statement is made that other things slip into insignificance, and that it will be God alone who will delight us, the soul which was accustomed to enjoy many things is, as it were, circumscribed. This carnal soul, committed to the flesh, bound by carnal desires, having wings enmeshed in the bird lime of evil passions to prevent it from flying to God, says to itself: 'What will I have when I shall not eat or drink, when I shall not sleep with my wife? What sort of joy shall I have?' This joy of yours derives from sickness, not from health. Assuredly, in this world this flesh of yours is some-

15 Cf. Isa. 26.10.

times sick and sometimes well. Pay attention now, so that I may tell you something from which you can understand that of which I am unable to speak. Sick persons have certain longings: they are consumed with desire for some spring-water or for some fruit; and they are so consumed with this longing that they think that if they were well they should enjoy these same desires. Health comes back; and the longing disappears. The man now scorns what he used to long for, because he sought this object when he was in a fever. And now, what is the nature of that health in which the sick man grows strong?

(8) What is the nature of that health by the possession of of which we are said to be strong? Well, take another example from this situation. Since there are manifold desires of the sick which health takes away, in just the same way as physical health does that, so immortality removes all other desires because immortality is our health. Recall the [words of] the Apostle and see what will be our lot: 'This corruptible body must put on incorruption, and this mortal body must put on immortality.'[16] And furthermore, we shall be equal to the angels of God.[17] Now are those persons wretched who do not feast? Are they not happier for the very reason that they do not need these things? Or, in truth, is any rich man whatsoever equal to the angels? Angels are truly rich. What things are called riches? Abilities. Angels have great abilities because they have great capabilities. When a rich man is extolled, you hear: 'How great he is! He is a master; he is rich; he is powerful. How great a thing it is that he can go wherever he wishes! Beasts of burden are at hand; equipment is at his disposal; servants are at his call; services are rendered. The rich man has all these blessings; he goes wherever he wishes; he suffers no labor.' Wherever an angel desires in which the victory of charity is endangered. Here, horses,' nor does he say: 'Prepare my couch,' as rich people

16 1 Cor. 15.53.
17 Cf. Matt. 22.30.

say with pride when they desire to make themselves great because they have underlings to whom they can say: 'Yoke the horses' or 'Prepare my couch.' Unhappy man! Those words indicate weakness, not power. Hence, in heaven we shall not experience need, and, on that account, we shall be happy. For we shall be filled, but it will be with our God; and He will be for us all those things which we here look upon as being of great value. Here you seek for food as for something important; there God will be your food. Here you seek carnal embraces; 'but it is good for me to adhere to my God.'[18] Here you seek for riches; how will you need all things there where you possess Him who made all things? Lastly, to establish you in security by the words of the Apostle, concerning that life he said: 'That God may be all in all.'[19]

Sermon 256

(1) Since it has pleased the Lord our God that, meeting here in person, we should, in union with your Charity, sing in His honor the 'Alleluia' which is translated as 'Praise God,' let us give praise to the Lord, my brethren, in life and in speech, in heart and in voice, in words and in actions. For God wishes the 'Alleluia' to be said in His honor in such a way that there will be nothing discordant in the one giving praise. Therefore, in ourselves above all let speech accord with life, tongue with conscience. I repeat, let our words agree with our actions lest, perhaps, fair words bear testimony against foul manners. O! joyous is the 'Alleluia' in heaven where angels are the temple of God! For the utmost harmony of those giving praise exists there where there is tranquil rejoicing among those singing, where no law in the members opposes the law of the mind, where there is no conflict of desires in which the victory of charity is endangered. Here,

18 Ps. 72.28.
19 1 Cor. 15.28.

therefore, let us sing 'Alleluia' though we are still beset with cares, so that in the future we may sing it there in tranquillity. Why are you beset with cares here? Do you not wish me to be anxious when I read: 'Is not the life of man upon earth a warfare?'[1] Do you not wish me to be anxious when, in addition, this warning is given to me: 'Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation'?[2] Do you not wish me to be anxious where temptation so abounds that our very prayer[3] prescribes vigilance, since we say: 'Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors'? Daily there are plaintiffs; daily there are debtors. Do you wish me to be free from care where I daily seek pardon for sins and help against dangers? For when, on account of past sins, I have said: 'Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors,' immediately, on account of future dangers, I hasten to add: 'And lead us not into temptation.' Furthermore, how is a nation in good circumstances when it cries with me: 'Deliver us from evil'?

Nevertheless, my brethren, even in the midst of evil let us sing 'Alleluia' to our good God who frees us from evil. Why do you look around you at the circumstances from which God is to free you when He does free you from evil? Do not go far; do not focus the keenness of your mind on every possible object. Return into yourself; look at yourself. You are still evil. Hence, when God frees you from yourself, then He delivers you from evil. Hear the Apostle,[4] and in his words recognize the evil from which you must be delivered. 'For I am delighted with the law of God according to the inner man, but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and making me prisoner to the law of sin that is . . . .' Where? He says: 'Making me prisoner to the law of sin that is in my members.' I was

1 Cf. Job. 7.1.
2 Mark 14.38.
3 Matt. 6.12,13.
4 Rom. 7.22-25.

under the impression that it made you prisoner to some barbarian strangers or other; I was under the impression that it made you prisoner to some foreign nations or other, or at least to some men or others as rulers. But he says: 'That is in my members.' Cry out, then, with him: 'Unhappy man that I am! Who will deliver me?' From what will anyone deliver him? Tell me this. One says from freedom, another from prison, another from captivity among barbarians, another from fever and weakness; tell us, O Apostle, not where we are being cast or where we are being led, but what we carry within ourselves, what we ourselves are; tell us. 'From the body of this death.' From the body of this death? Yes, he says: 'From the body of this death.'

(2) Someone now says: 'The body of this death does not concern me. My prison is a temporary one; my fetters are temporary. I am in the body of death; I am not the body of death.' I answer: 'You are merely drawing conclusions; hence, you are not being freed.' For he says: 'I am a spirit; I am not flesh, but I am in the flesh; when I shall have been delivered from the flesh, what shall I then have to do with the flesh?' My brethren, do you wish me to answer this challenge, or do your prefer the Apostle? If I reply, perhaps the great value of the message will be despised because of the insignificance of the messenger. I prefer to be silent. But listen with me to the Doctor of the Gentiles; listen with me to the Vessel of election, so that you may be freed from contentious debating. Listen, but first repeat what you were saying. Indeed, this is what you were declaring: 'I am not flesh; but I am a spirit. I groan in my prison, and when these bonds and fetters have been dissolved, I depart hence as a free man. Earth is restored to earth; the spirit is taken up into heaven. I depart; I cast aside what I am not.' Now, therefore, is this what you were saying? 'Yes,' he answers. I do not reply to you; I beg you to answer, O Apostle; answer. You preached so that you might be heard; you wrote so that you might be read; you did everything so that

you might be believed. Say: 'Who will deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Whence does it free you? 'From the body of this death.' But, are you yourself not the body of this death? He answers: 'Therefore I myself with my mind serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin.' But, you say: 'I myself.' How is it you yourself under different aspects? He answers: 'With my mind, because I love; with my flesh, because I desire. I am, indeed, a victor if I do not consent; but up to now I am still struggling, and my adversary is still enticing me.' And, O Apostle, when you have been delivered from this flesh, will you no longer exist except in spirit? The Apostle, still confronted with death, an obligation which no one escapes, answers: 'I do not put off the flesh forever; I put it aside for a time.' Therefore, are you destined to return to this body of death? Now what do you say? Let us rather listen to the words of our questioner: 'How do you return to the body from which you declared in such a devout voice that you had to be delivered?' He replies: 'Indeed, I do return to the body, but no longer to the body of this death.' Hearken, O ignorant one, deaf to the daily instruction of the readings, hear how one returns to the body, indeed, but not to the body of this death. This happens, not because it will be another body, but because 'this corruptible body must put on incorruption, and this mortal body must put on immortality.' My brethren, when the Apostle said 'this corruptible body' and 'this mortal body,' he by these words referred, in a certain way, to his own flesh, and hence, not to another body. He said: 'I do not put aside my earthly body and take up a spiritual or heavenly body. I take up the same body, but it is no longer a body of this death, because this corruptible body (not another body, but this one) must put on incorruption, and this mortal body (not another, but this one) must put on immortality. . . . Then shall come to pass the word that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory!" (Let the 'Alleluia' be sung.) Then shall come to pass the

word that is written, which is the utterance of persons, no longer fighting, but now victorious: "Death is swallowed up in victory! (Let the 'Alleluia' be sung.) O death, where is thy sting? (Let the 'Alleluia' be sung.) Now the sting of death is sin." '[5] But 'thou shalt seek his place and shalt not find it.'[6]

(3) Yet, even here amid dangers, and here amid temptations, let the 'Alleluia' be sung by others and by us, too. 'For God is faithful and will not permit you to be tempted beyond your strength.' Therefore, let us, too, sing 'Alleluia' here. Man is still guilty; but God is faithful. The Apostle does not say: 'He will not permit you to be tempted,' but: 'He will not permit you to be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also give you a way out that you may be able to bear it.'[7] You have entered into temptation, but God will give you a way out, so that you may not perish in the trial; so that, like a vessel of clay, you may be fashioned by preaching and baked by tribulation. However, when you enter into temptation, look forward to a successful issue, because God is faithful; 'He will keep thy going in and thy going out.'[8]

But, on the other hand, when this body has become immortal and incorruptible, when all temptation has passed, because 'the body, it is true, is dead,' why did it die? 'By reason of sin, but the spirit is life,' are the words of the Apostle.[9] Why [is the spirit life]? 'By reason of justification.' Therefore, do we cast aside the dead body? Not at all; on the contrary, hear this: 'But if the spirit of him who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will also bring to life your mortal bodies.' In fact, it is now a natural body; then it will be a spiritual body, 'for the first man became a living soul; the

5 1 Cor. 15.53-57.
6 Ps. 36.10.
7 1 Cor. 10.13.
8 Cf. Ps. 120.8.
9 Rom. 8.10,11.

last man, a life-giving spirit.'[10] Hence, 'he will also bring to life your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who dwells in you.'[11] O 'Alleluia,' joyful on that account; O peaceful 'Alleluia'! O 'Alleluia' without any adversary, there where no one will be hostile, where no friend perishes! There praises ascend to God; here, too, praises ascend to God; but here they rise from troubled hearts, there from hearts at peace; here they rise from those destined to die, there from those destined to live forever; here praises rise in hope, there, in reality; here they ascend from the wayfarer's path, there from his homeland. Therefore, my brethren, let us sing now, not for the delights of peace, but for the solace of our labor. Just as travelers are accustomed to sing, sing but advance; solace your labor by singing; do not love inactivity; keep singing and keep progressing. What does that mean? Make progress, make progress in well-doing, for, according to the Apostle, there are certain people who go from bad to worse.[12] If you are progressing, you are advancing; but progress in well-doing, progress in good faith, progress in good deeds. Keep singing and keep advancing. Do not wander; do not return; do not remain stationary.

Sermon 257

(1) What is expressed in the Hebrew language by 'Alleluia' is, in Latin, *Laudate Dominum*, or 'Praise the Lord.' So, let us praise the Lord our God, not only with our voice, but also with our heart, since he who praises from the heart praises with the voice of the inner man. As far as men are concerned, the voice is a sound; as far as God is concerned, it expresses an emotion.

(2) As you have read and as you have heard, the Psalmist

10 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.45.
11 Rom. 8.11.
12 Cf. 2 Tim. 3.13.

under divine inspiration said: 'Every man is a liar.'[1] Then, later, there was the disciple who refused to believe unless he had touched the body of the Lord. The truth which his fellow disciples voiced seemed to him to be a lie. It was not enough for him to hear the truth; he wished also to have tangible evidence. Moreover, the Lord made this clear to him in the passage which follows in the Gospel and which will be read later.[2] Whoever hears the words, 'Every man is a liar,' ought not to become entangled in lying and be unwilling to rise from that state; he ought not to fashion specious arguments within himself, like an untruthful man, saying: 'When will I not be a man? If, moreover, I shall be a liar as long as I am a man, it is better for me to be a liar than that the Scripture should lie when it says: "Every man is a liar." For, if I am truthful, the Scripture is untruthful. But, because the Scripture cannot lie, I shall be a liar.' Prattling such things as these, he seems to himself to rest as if in security in the harbor of lying where he is about to suffer shipwreck. As if you, too, have been eager to enjoy a good rest in that port, learn about the rock against which you are running: 'Thou wilt destroy all that speak a lie.'[3] And that is the Scripture of God which says: 'Thou wilt destroy all that speak a lie.' Therefore, He is going to destroy all, because 'Every man is a liar.' But, why was this said to us? Why have we been admonished? Because of our own nature we are liars. However, if we wish to be truthful, let us have recourse to the Lord. By His help we are truthful; by our own nature we are liars.

(3) Learn this lesson from one example, one that is both small and great, small because it is related quickly, great because it is freighted with wisdom. Peter alone illustrates this lesson which I wish to point out.[4] When he said to the

1 Ps. 115.11.
2 Cf. John 20.25-30.
3 Ps. 5.7.
4 Matt. 16.16-18,22,23.

Lord Christ: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' what did the Lord answer? 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven.' You have told the truth, but not of yourself. Whence, then? 'My Father who is in heaven has revealed it to you.' Hence, you are blessed because of the help of God; of yourself you are nothing but wretchedness. After these words in which the Lord said to Peter: 'Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven,' after these words the Lord Christ began to predict His passion and death. Thereupon Peter said immediately: 'Far be it from thee, O Lord.' 'Every man is a liar.' Behold, a short time previously, Peter was truthful; behold, now, Peter is a liar. But what was the source of Peter's truthfulness? 'Flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven.' What was the source of Peter's lie? 'Get behind me, Satan . . . for thou dost not mind the things of God, but those of men.' 'Every man is a liar.' This statement, therefore, has been made to us so that we may flee from ourselves and take refuge in God who alone is truthful.

Sermon 258

(1) Let us here discuss what we have just sung to God: 'This is the day which the Lord hath made,' because He has given it to us. Here by a Scriptural passage which is certainly prophetic, He wished us to recognize a day out of the ordinary, not visible to the eyes of flesh, a day which does not rise and set, but a day which could know a rising and never know a setting. Let us see what the Psalmist had said previously: 'The stone which the builders rejected; the same is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing: and it is wonderful in our eyes.' And then there follows the passage: 'This is the day which the Lord hath made.'[1] Let

1 Ps. 117.22-24.

us consider this day as beginning at the cornerstone. Who is the cornerstone whom the teachers of the Jews rejected? In truth, the learned teachers of the Jews rejected the Lord when they said: 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.'[2] You have already said: 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.' 'The stone which the builders rejected; the same has become the head of the corner.' How has He become the head of the corner? Why has Christ been called the cornerstone? Because every corner welds together two walls coming from different directions. The Apostles came from the circumcision; they came from the race of the Jews. Thence, also, came the crowds, who preceded and followed His beast of burden, singing the words which are found in the same psalm: 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'[3] Thence, too, came the several churches of which the Apostle Paul wrote: 'And I was unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. But they had heard only that he who formerly persecuted us, now preaches the faith which once he ravaged. And they glorified God in me.'[4] These were Jews; but only those who adhered to Christ as did the Apostles, those who came and believed in Christ, constituted the one wall. There was another wall: the Church coming from the Gentiles who [in doing so] found themselves. There was peace in Christ, unity in Christ 'who has made both one.'[5] 'This is the day which the Lord hath made.' Consider the whole day: head and body; Christ the Head, the Church the Body. 'This is the day which the Lord hath made.'

(2) Recall to your minds the original state of the world. 'Darkness covered the abyss, and the spirit of God was stirring above the waters. God said, "Let there be light," and there was light . . . . God separated the light from the darkness,

2 John 9.16.
3 Matt. 21.9; Ps. 117.26.
4 Gal. 1.22-24.
5 Eph. 2.14.

calling the light Day and the darkness Night.'[6] Consider the darkness of people before they came to the remission of sins. Hence, 'darkness covered the abyss' before the sins of these people were forgiven. However, the 'spirit of God was stirring above the waters'; they descended into the water and the 'spirit of God was stirring above the waters'; the darkness of sins was dispersed. 'This is the day which the Lord hath made.' This is the day of which the Apostle said: 'You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.'[7] He did not say, did he: 'You were darkness in the Lord'? No; you were 'darkness' in yourselves, but 'light in the Lord.' Moreover, the Lord called the light Day because whatever is done is done by His grace. People could be darkness by their own propensities; they could become light only if the Lord made them so, because 'this is the day which the Lord hath made,' which, not the day itself, but the Lord hath made.

(3) Was not Thomas a man, one of the disciples, as it were, a man of the crowd? His fellow disciples said to him: 'We have seen the Lord.' But he answered: 'Unless I touch him, unless I put my finger into his side, I will not believe.'[8] (The Evangelists make an announcement to you, but you do not believe). The world has believed them, but a disciple does not believe. Concerning those Evangelists the Scripture says: 'Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth: and their words unto the ends of the world.'[9] Their words go forth and they reach unto the ends of the world; the whole world believes; all nations make the announcement to one man, and yet he does not believe. Not yet was it the day which the Lord had made; darkness still covered the abyss and darkness was still there in the depths of that human heart.

6 Gen. 1.2-6.
7 Eph. 5.8.
8 John 20.25.
9 Ps. 18.5.

However, let Him come; let the Head of this day come, and let Him, patient, meek, and not angry, because He is the Physician, say: 'Come, touch Me and believe. You said: "Unless I touch Him, unless I put my finger in, I shall not believe." Come, touch Me. Put in your finger and be not unbelieving but believing. Come, put in your finger. I knew your wounds. I have kept My wounds for you.' Moreover, putting in his hand certainly confirmed the faith of that disciple. For what is the fullness of faith? That Christ be believed to be not merely Man, that Christ be believed to be not only God, but that He be believed to be both Man and God—that is the fullness of faith because 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'[10]

Therefore, when the wounds and limbs of His Saviour had been presented to him to be touched, the disciple touched them and exclaimed: 'My Lord and my God!'[11] He touched a Man; he recognized God. He touched flesh; he looked upon the Word, because 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' This Word suffered His flesh to be hung upon a tree; this Word suffered His flesh to be fastened with nails; this Word suffered His flesh to be pierced with a lance; this Word suffered His flesh to be placed in a tomb; this Word raised His flesh to life, presented it to the gaze of His disciples, offered it to be touched by their hands. They touch and they cry out: 'My Lord and my God!' 'This is the Day which the Lord hath made.'

10 John 1.14.
11 John 20.28.

Sermon 259

For the Octave of Easter

(1) This day is a symbol of perpetual joy for us, for the life which this day signifies will not pass away as this day is going to pass away. And so, my brethren, I urge and entreat you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom our sins have been forgiven, who wished His blood to be our purchase price, who deigned to make us His brethren although we are unworthy of being called His servants, I urge you to direct your entire reason for being Christians and for carrying His name on your forehead and in your heart solely to that life which we are destined to enjoy with the angels, where there is perpetual peace, everlasting happiness, unfailing blessedness, with no anxiety, no sadness, and no death. Only those persons who have experienced this life understand it; only those who believe can experience it. For, if you require me to show you what God promises you, I cannot do so. However, you have heard the words with which the Gospel of John ended: 'Blessed are they who do not see and yet believe.'[1] You wish to see and so do I. Let us believe together and we shall see together. Let us not be obstinate in regard to the word of God. For, my brethren, is it fitting for Christ to descend now from heaven and to show us His wounds? He deigned to manifest them to one incredulous person so that he might rebuke and instruct those who would believe in the future.

(2) Therefore, the eighth day signifies the new life at the end of the world; the seventh day, the future rest of the saints on this earth. For the Lord will reign on earth[2] with

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1 Cf. John 20.29.

2 It seems that, in the early days of his conversion, St. Augustine believed that the saints after death would enjoy a period of rest and happiness here on earth for many years before ascending to heaven; see *De civitate Dei* 20.7; 22.30.

His saints, as the Scripture says, and He will have here His Church into which no wicked person will enter, which will be purged and cleansed from all contagion of iniquity, a situation typified by the 153 fishes[3] about which I spoke at length in another sermon as I well remember. For the Church will appear here for the first time in great glory and dignity and justice. In it no one will take delight in deceit, in lying, or in concealing a wolf under the skin of a sheep. Indeed, as it is written: 'The Lord will come and will bring to light the things hidden in darkness and make manifest the counsels of hearts; and then everyone will have praise from God.'[4]

Therefore, the wicked will not be there, for by that time they will have been separated. The multitude of saints will appear as a sifted mass on a threshing floor, as it were, and will thus be transferred to the celestial granary of immortality. For, in like manner, grain is first threshed there where it is is winnowed, and the place where the grain suffered the purging so that it might be cleansed of chaff is adorned with the glory of the sifted mass. Indeed, after the winnowing we see on the threshing floor a pile of chaff in one place and a pile of grain in another. Moreover, we know well what the destination of the chaff is going to be and we know how the grain brings joy to the farmers. Therefore, just as the grain first appears on the threshing floor after having been separated from the chaff and then, when the sight of that mass which lay concealed in the chaff and which was invisible during the threshing has brought so much joy after such great labors, it is sent off to the granary and is stored away in a secluded place, so in this age you see how the threshing is done, but the chaff is so mixed with the grain that it is scarcely perceived because the pile has not yet been winnowed. Thus, too, after the winnowing of the day of judgment, the multitude of saints will appear resplendent by

3 Cf. John 21.11.
4 Cf. 1 Cor. 4.5.

reason of their glory, powerful by their merits, and manifesting the mercy of their Redeemer.

That will be the seventh day, just as if the first day in the whole era were the time from Adam to Noe; the second, from Noe to Abraham; the third, from Abraham to David, as the Gospel of Matthew divides it;[5] the fourth, from David to the Transmigration into Babylon; the fifth, from the Transmigration to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sixth day, therefore, begins with the coming of the Lord, and we are living in that sixth day. Hence, just as in Genesis[6] [we read that] man was fashioned in the image of God on the sixth day, so in our time, as if on the sixth day of the entire era, we are born again in baptism so that we may receive the image of our Creator. But, when that sixth day will have passed, rest will come after the judgment, and the holy and just ones of God will celebrate their sabbath. After the seventh day, however, when the glory of the harvest, the brightness and the merit of the saints have appeared on the threshing floor, then we shall go to that life and rest of which the Scripture says: 'Eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him.'[7] Then we return, as if to the beginning, for just as when seven days have passed, the eighth becomes the first [of a new week], so after the seven periods of this transitory world have been spent and completed, we shall return to that immortal blessedness from which man fell. Hence, octaves complete the sacraments of the newly baptized. Hence, too, the number seven multiplied bv seven gives forty-nine and with one added it returns to the beginning and becomes fifty, the number of days which we celebrate in symbolic fashion up to the feast of Pentecost. The same number is reached in a different way according to that division whereby the tenfold reward is added to the

5 Cf. Matt. 1.17.
6 Cf. Gen. 1.27.
7 1 Cor. 2.9.

number forty. Both methods of calculation lead to the same number, fifty. Then, when fifty has been multiplied by three because of the mystery of the Trinity, the result is 150. Furthermore, by the addition of three, as the witness and indication of the Trinity, we recognize the Church in those 153 fishes.

(3) In the meantime, until we come to that rest, let us work well in this time when we are laboring and are in darkness as long as we do not see what we hope for and as long as we are making our way through the desert until we arrive at that heavenly Jerusalem as at the land of promise overflowing with milk and honey. Now, therefore, since temptations do not cease, let us work well. Let medicine be always at hand, as though kept near to be applied to our daily wounds. Moreover, there is a healing power in good works of mercy. For, if you wish to obtain the mercy of God, be merciful. If you as a man refuse human help to a man, God will refuse you divine help, that is, the incorruption of immortality by which He makes us Godlike. For God does not need anything from you; but you need everything from God. He seeks nothing from you in order to be happy; but, if you do not receive from Him, you cannot be happy. What do you receive from Him? I am certain that you would not dare to complain if, from Him who made all things, you were to receive any one of the things which He made most perfectly. However, He does not merely give you something from those objects which He created, but He gives Himself, the Creator of all things to you for your enjoyment. Indeed, of all those things He has made, what can be more beautiful or better than He who made them? And why will He give Himself to you? Is it because of your merits? If you seek what you have merited, consider your sins; hear the sentence passed by God upon man, the transgressor: 'Dust you are and unto dust you shall return'[8] —the warning had been given along with the precept: 'For

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8 Gen. 3.19.

the day on which you touch it, you will die the death.'[9] If you seek the merit of your sins, what presents itself except punishment? Therefore, forget your merits lest they bring terror to your heart; or rather, do not forget them lest, by reason of your pride, you repel mercy.

Let us commend ourselves to God, my brethren, by works of mercy. 'O praise ye the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.'[10] Give praise, for God is merciful and He wishes to forgive the sins of those who give praise. In addition, offer sacrifice to Him. O man, be merciful to your fellow man, and God will show mercy to you. You are a man; the other person is a man also; you are both in need of mercy. On the other hand, God is not in need of mercy, but He is merciful. If, however, the person who is in need of mercy does not show mercy to another who is in need of mercy, how does he expect mercy from One who will never be in need of mercy? Think over what I am saying, brethren. For example, whoever is pitiless in regard to a shipwrecked person remains pitiless until he himself suffers shipwreck. But if he has been shipwrecked, whenever he sees a shipwrecked person he recalls his former experience and a sympathetic feeling of misery afflicts him. Hence, a personal experience of misfortune softens the one whom the common bond of human nature was not able to incline to mercy. How readily he who has been in service in the past compassionates a servant! How readily he who was once a hired laborer feels sorry for a laborer deprived of his pay! The man who has once suffered a similar loss sympathizes most sincerely with a father lamenting the loss of his child. Therefore, a similarity of suffering softens any degree of hardness in a human heart. If, then, you who either have been in need of mercy or who fear that you may be in such need (for, as long as you are on this earth, you ought to fear what you have not been, to remember what you have been,

9 Cf. Gen. 2.17.
10 Ps. 117.29.

and to consider what you may be)—if, then, encompassed with the memory of your former need of mercy, with the fear of future needs, and with the suffering of present miseries, you do not have mercy on a man who is in trouble and in need of your help, do you expect Him whom misery has never afflicted to have mercy on you? And do you fail to give of the abundance which you have received from God and then wish God to give to you from that which He has not received from you?

(4) My brethren, all of you who are about to return to your homes and whom I shall scarcely see from this moment except at some celebration, do works of mercy because your sins are numerous. There is no other rest, there is no other way by which to come to God, by which our life may be renewed, by which we may be reconciled to Him whom we have offended with the utmost danger to ourselves. We are going to appear in His presence: let our works speak for us there and let them speak so effectually that they will prevail over our offenses. For whatever has been more abundant will avail—either unto punishment, if our sins have so merited, or unto eternal rest, if our good works have prevailed.

Moreover, there is a twofold mercy in the Church: the first, which depends on a privilege on account of which one has to expend no money and no labor; the other, which demands of us either the performance of some work or the expenditure of money. The former, which makes no demand upon us, not even of labor, has been implanted in the soul so that you may pardon him who sinned against you. The treasure to be drawn upon for the expenditure of this alms is in your heart; there in the presence of God you open up this treasure. You are not given the command: 'Bring your treasure-chest; open your strong box; give up your storehouse.' Nor is this said to you: 'Come, walk, run, hurry, intercede, speak, visit, work.' On the contrary, remaining in one place, you cast from your heart the two charges which you hold against your brother; you show

mercy with no expense, with no labor, but with goodness alone and with merciful consideration alone. For, if I were to say: 'Give your possessions to the poor,' I would seem harsh. But now I am certainly moderate and lenient when I say: 'Give in such a way that you will lose nothing; forgive so that you may be forgiven.' Moreover, let us add that other statement: 'Give and it shall be given to you.' The Lord joined these two directions in His precept, and thus He set forth the two kinds of mercy: 'Forgive and you shall be forgiven'—that is the mercy of the one who pardons; 'give and it shall be given to you'[11]—that is the mercy of the one who gives payment. See if God does not give more to you. You pardon a man the offense in which a man has injured another man; God pardons you the offense in which you, a man, have offended God. Is the offense against a man commensurate with the offense against God? Therefore, God has given you more, in so far as you have forgiven an act by which a man was offended, but He has forgiven you an act by which He, God, was offended. Notice another mercy of His dispensation: you give bread, but He gives salvation; you give a drink of some liquid to a thirsty person, but He gives a draught of His wisdom. Now, are those two gifts, namely, what you give and what you receive, to be compared? Behold how your money must be set at interest. If anyone desires to be a money-lender, I have no objections; but let him invest with Him who does not become impoverished by giving more and greater gifts in return, and to whom belongs each and every gift that you give to Him so that you may receive more and better gifts.

(5) I give this instruction to your Holiness so that you may know that he performs a twofold act of mercy who gives something to the poor in such a way that he himself may look for remuneration. For there ought to be not only the graciousness of the one who bestows but also the humility of the one who serves. In some way or other, my brethren,

11 Luke 6.37-39.

when the hand of the one who has much is placed in the hand of the needy, the mind of the one who makes the offering to the poor man suffers, as it were, in sympathy with his common humanity and infirmity. Although the one gives and the other receives, both he who serves and he who is served are joined together. As a matter of fact, it is humility, not calamity, that unites us. Your abundance will be yours, and your children's, if it please the Lord; but there is no mention here of that earthly abundance which you see attended by such great misfortunes. A treasure lies in peace in the house; but it does not permit the master to be at peace. He fears the robber; he fears the house-breaker; he fears the unfaithful servant; he fears his wicked and powerful neighbor. The more he possesses, the more he fears. But if you give alms to God in behalf of the poor, you do not lose your wealth and you are rendered secure because God, who gives you what you need on earth, watches over the rest for you in heaven.

Or, perhaps, you fear that Christ may lose what you have entrusted to Him? Does not each one choose from his household a faithful steward to whom he may entrust his money? Even though this steward may be able to refrain from stealing the treasure, he does not have it in his power to prevent somebody else from doing so. What is more advantageous than the fidelity of Christ? What is more divine than His omnipotence? He can neither steal anything from you because He Himself has given all to you with the expectation that you would return it to Him; nor can He lose anything because, being omnipotent, He possesses all things. You refresh bodies when you make gifts. Our gifts are bestowed, and they are bestowed by us because we seem to be giving them; nevertheless, the gifts that are bestowed are those which God gave us. Still, it is good, my brethren, and it is very pleasing to God for you to present these gifts with your own hand. He who gave you what you might bestow even before He was, as it were, obligated to you, accepts them and will reward you. The duty of making remuneration ought

to be concomitant with that of ministration. Since you are permitted to have two rewards, why do you lose one? Besides, if anyone is not able to give to all, let him, in proportion to his resources, give to the poor with joy. 'Moreover, God loves a cheerful giver.'[12] The kingdom of heaven has been presented to us as worthy of being purchased at any price. There is no need for anyone who has merely two coins to say that he is not worthy to purchase it, for at such a price the widow mentioned in the Gospel purchased it.[13]

(6) The days of leisure have come to an end;[14] now those of court actions, trials for debt, and lawsuits are beginning. Give thought to your manner of life during these days, brethren. From the freedom of the former days you ought to derive kindness, not ponder plans for contentions. For there are men whose sole purpose in resting during those days was to plan wicked projects to be consummated after the holidays. I ask you to live as persons who know that you are about to render to God an account of your whole life and not merely of those fifteen days.

Furthermore, I admit that I ought to discuss the questions on the Scriptures which I proposed yesterday and which I did not answer because of lack of time. In view of the fact that the days which are at hand permit the exaction even of money by a legal and public right, you are certainly justified in demanding this of me by your right as Christians. As a matter of fact, all are now coming [to church] because of the feast; but, after these days let love of the law lead them to demand of me what I have promised. For He who gives to you gives through my instrumentality; He certainly gives to all of us. Indeed, I realize that the Apostle says: 'Render to all men whatever is their due; tribute to whom

12 Cf. 2 Cor. 9.7.
13 Cf. Luke 21.1-5.
14 St. Augustine here refers to the two weeks, one before and one after Easter, during which, according to the Code of Theodosius, strife and contention were to cease.

tribute is due; taxes to whom taxes are due; honor to whom honor is due; fear to whom fear is due. Owe no man anything except to love one another.'[15] Love alone must always be rendered; no one is to be excluded from this obligation. Now, in the name of the Lord, my brethren, I am going to pay what I owe; but I make this admission to you that I am doing this, not as a duty in regard to the inert, but in response to those who urge me.

Sermon 260

Lest I should interpose unnecessary delay when there are many things to be done, my sermon to those who have been regenerated in baptism and who today are to be intermingled again with the crowd must be brief but weighty. You, who have been baptized and who on this day are completing the rite of your eight-day celebration, receive and understand by these few words that the symbolism of circumcision of the flesh has been transferred to a circumcision of the heart. On the eighth day the Jews are circumcised in the flesh according to the Old Law;[1] this was done in anticipation of the fact that the Lord Christ, after the seventh day of the sabbath, rose again on the eighth day or the Lord's Day. It was ordered that the circumcision be done with petrous knives:[2] the Rock was Christ.[3] You are called infants since you have been reborn and have entered upon a new life; you have been reborn unto eternal life if, by evil living, you do not stifle that which has been regenerated in you. You have to return to the people; you have to mingle with the faithful; beware of imitating wicked believers, even false believers, those who are believers by their profession, but unbelievers

15 Cf. Rom. 13.7-9.

1 Cf. Gen. 17.12.
2 Cf. Jos. 5.2.
3 Cf. 1 Cor. 10.4.

by their evil lives. Take care—I call you to witness in the presence of God and of His angels—preserve your chastity, whether it be conjugal or any other kind of continency. Let each one fulfill what he promises. You who do not have wives may marry women whose husbands are not living. Women whose husbands are not living are permitted to marry only men whose wives are not living. You who have wives, refrain from evil doing with other women. Give what you demand. Fidelity is owed to you; you owe fidelity. The husband owes fidelity to his wife; the wife, to her husband; both, to God. You who have vowed continency, give what you have vowed; it would not have been demanded if you had not vowed it. What could have been licit is not licit, not because marriage is condemned, but because he who looks back is condemned.[4] Guard against trickery in your business transactions. Guard against lying and perjury. Guard against talkativeness and luxury. Do not do to others, to men or to God, whatever you do not wish to be done to you. Why do I burden you [with many instructions]? 'These things practise. And the God of peace will be with you.'[5]

4 Cf. Luke 9.62.
5 Phil. 4.9.

FOR THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION

Sermon 261[1]

THE RESURRECTION of the Lord is our hope; the Ascension of the Lord is our exaltation. Now, today we are celebrating the feast of the Ascension. If, therefore, we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord with due ceremony, with faith, devotion, holiness, and reverence, let us ascend with Him and let us have our hearts lifted up to Him.[2] Moreover, though we ascend, let us not be lifted up. Indeed, we ought to have our hearts lifted up, but to the Lord. For, to have the heart lifted up otherwise than to the Lord is called pride; but, to have it lifted up to the Lord is called a refuge, for we say to Him who ascended: 'Lord, thou hast been our refuge.'[3] For He rose again to give us hope that what dies will rise again, lest in dying we should despair and think what our whole life has come to an end. As a matter of fact, we were anxious about our soul; He, by rising again, has given us assurance about our body also. Now, therefore, He has ascended. Who? He who descended. He came down from heaven to heal you; He ascended to heaven to lift you up. You will fall if you attempt to raise

1 The text used for this sermon is that given in Lambot, *Sermones Selecti* 88-94.
2 From the Preface of the Mass.
3 Ps. 89.1.

yourself; you will remain there if He has raised you up. Then, lift up your heart—but to the Lord: He is your Refuge; lift up your heart—not to the Lord: it is pride. Therefore, when the Lord rises, let us say to Him: 'Because thou, O Lord, art my hope'; but when He ascends, let us say to Him: 'Thou hast made the most high thy refuge.'[4] For, how shall we be proud if we have our hearts lifted up to Him who for our sake became lowly so that we might not remain proud?

(2) Christ is God; He is always God; He will never cease to be God, because He never had a beginning. For, if, by His grace, something begins which is never going to cease, how will He cease to exist who never began? What is that which begins and will never cease? Our immortality will have a beginning; it will never have an end. For we do not now possess that which we shall never lose again once we have begun to possess it. Therefore, Christ is always God. And what sort of God is He? Do you ask this? He is equal to the Father. Do not, therefore, inquire about His nature, but about His blessedness in eternity. Understand now, if you can, the nature of Christ as God. Behold, I am telling you; I shall not deceive you. You seek to know about the nature of Christ as God? Listen to me; nay, rather, listen with me. Let us listen together; let us learn together. For the fact that I am speaking and you are listening does not mean that I am not listening along with you. Therefore, when you hear that Christ is God, you make inquiry as to the nature of Christ as God. Listen with me. I do not say: 'Listen to me,' but 'Listen with me.' For, in this school we are all fellow students; heaven is the chair of our professor. Hear, then, what the nature of Christ as God is. 'In the beginning was the Word.' Where? 'And the Word was with God.' But we are accustomed to hearing those words daily. Do not consider the passage: 'And the Word was God'[5] as you usually hear

4 Ps. 90.9.
5 John 1.1.

it; I am asking what His nature is. For, behold, I already believe that He is God; however, I seek what the nature of God is. 'Seek his face evermore.'[6] Let no one fail in the search; but let each one accomplish his purpose. He who is impelled by piety, not by vanity, succeeds in this search. How does piety proceed to investigate? How does vanity? Piety investigates by believing; vanity, by arguing. Now, if you seek to argue with me and to say to me: 'What God do you worship? What is the nature of the God whom you worship? Show me what you worship,' I shall reply: 'Though there is that which I may show, there is no one to whom to show it.

(3) I do not dare to say that I have grasped what you desire to know for I am following, to the best of my ability, in the footprints of that great athlete of Christ, the Apostle Paul, who says: 'Brethren, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it already. But I myself—.' Why does he say: 'I' and 'I myself'—I who 'have labored more than any of them'?[7] I understand, O Apostle, why you say 'I.' It is for emphasis, not for self-elation. Do you wish to hear why he says 'I'? When the Apostle had said: 'I have labored more than any of them,' he referred to himself. He said: 'I have labored more than any of them.' And, as if we had asked: 'Who has?' he answers us: 'Yet not I, but the grace of God with me.' Therefore, he in whom the grace of God was so abounding that, though called later, he accomplished more than his predecessors, nevertheless, said: 'Brethren, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it already.' There, where he has not comprehended, he uses 'I.' Slowness of comprehension is, indeed, a mark of human frailty. But, when he was lifted up to the third heaven and when he heard ineffable words which man is not permitted to utter, then he did not say 'I.' As a matter of fact, what did he say? 'I know that

6 Ps. 104.4.
7 Cf. Phil. 3.13; 1 Cor. 15.10.

a man fourteen years ago—.'[8] 'I know that a man,' and he himself, the one who was speaking, was the man. What happened to him he speaks of as having happened to another and, on that account, he has not failed [through pride.]

Therefore, do not contend with me, do not argue with me, demanding an explanation of the God whom I worship. For He is not an idol. I extend my finger and, whether it points to some constellation or some star, or to the sun or moon, I say to you: 'Behold the God whom I worship.' I point my finger to the heavens and I say: 'Behold what I worship.' He is not merely in the place to which my finger is pointed, but He is wherever my mind is directed. See the Apostle, not comprehending, yet seeking; following eagerly, gazing after, longing for, and desiring; see him; see his God toward whom he presses, whether by direction of others or by his own contemplation. What does he say? 'I do not consider that I have laid hold of it already. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind, I strain forward to what is before, I press on towards the goal, to the prize of God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.'[9] He says: 'I press on.' He says: 'I advance; I am on the way. Follow if you can. Let us come to the homeland together, where you will not seek from me nor I from you. Therefore, now let us seek together in our common belief so that afterwards we may rejoice together in eternal life.'

(4) As a matter of fact, who can enlighten you as to the nature of God? Behold, let Him say through this His servant to my fellow servants, His servants, what He deigned to say through that other servant. His words are: 'In the beginning was the Word.' And when you asked me where He was, you received the answer: 'And the Word was with God.' Then, lest you should scorn words uttered in the fashion of human speech, you heard: 'And the Word was God.' Do you still ask about the nature of God? 'All things were made through

8 Cf. 2 Cor. 12.2.
9 Phil. 3.13-15.

him.'[10] Love Him; whatever else you love is from Him. Let us not, neglecting the Creator, love the creature; instead, let us look at the creature and give praise to the Creator. I cannot show you my God; I show what He has done; I call to your attention what He has made. 'All things were made through him.' Not new Himself, He made all things new; eternal Himself, He made things temporal; He, who knew not how to change, made things mutable. Look at His works; praise the Workman. Believe so that you may be cleansed.

Do you really wish to see? Do you desire to see something good, something great? I urge you: wish for it. Do you wish to see? 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.'[11] First, then, think about purifying your heart; consider this an obligation; enlist all your energies for this task; be intent upon this work. What you desire to see is clean; the place from which you wish to see is unclean. You think of God as an immense or manifold brilliance visible to mortal eyes; you multiply space as much as you wish; you do not set a limit where you do not wish and you set the limit wherever you wish. These are the figments of your imagination; these are the uncleannesses of your mind. Take and cast them out. If dust were to fall into your eye, and if you wished me to show you the light, your eyes would first need to be cleansed. There is much uncleanness in your heart; wherever there is avarice, there is no small amount of uncleanness. You are heaping up what you cannot take with you. Do you not know that, when you thus heap up things, you are dragging mire into your heart? How, then, will you see what you seek?

(5) You say to me: 'Show me your God.' I answer you: 'Turn your attention to your own heart for a little while.' You say to me: 'Show me your God.' Again I answer: 'Turn your attention to your own heart for a little while. Take from it whatever you see there that is displeasing to

10 John 1.1.
11 Matt. 5.8.

God.' He, God, wishes to come to you. Hear the Lord Christ Himself: 'I and the Father will come to him and make our abode with him.'[12] Behold what God promises. If I were to promise to come into your house, you would cleanse it. God wishes to come into your heart; are you too lazy to clean out your house for Him? He does not like to live with avarice, with an unclean and insatiable mistress whose bidding you were obeying even when you sought to see God. What have you done which God commanded? What have you not done which avarice commanded? What have you done which God commanded? I am going to show you what is in your heart since you wish to see God. For I made this statement: 'There is that which I may show; there is no one to whom to show it.' What have you done which God has ordered? What have you failed to do which avarice has ordered? God ordered you to clothe the naked and you shuddered; avarice ordered you to strip the one clothed and you obeyed with alachity. If you had done what God ordered (why do I remind you?) would you have this and that possession? You would have God Himself. If you had done what God ordered, you would have God. You have done what avarice dictated; what do you have? I know you are going to say to me: 'I have whatever I have gained.' Hence, you possess by depriving others. Do you, who have lost yourself, have anything at home? You answer: 'Yes. I have.' I ask you: 'Where, where?' Without a doubt, it is in a secret place, or a purse, or a chest: I need not say more. Wherever you have it, you certainly do not have it with you now. Undoubtedly, you think you have it now in your chest. Perhaps it has disappeared and you do not realize it; perhaps, when you return home, you will not find that which you have lost. I am sounding your heart; I ask you what you have there. Behold, you have filled your treasure chest, and you have violated your conscience. Take thought of fullness; learn how to be full. 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken

12 Cf. John 14.23.

away: as it hath pleased the Lord so it is done: blessed be the name of the Lord.'[13] He [Job] certainly had lost all things. Whence, then, did he produce such gems of praise for the Lord?

(6) Therefore, cleanse your heart, so far as you can. Work at this; accomplish this. Ask, beg, and humble yourself so that God may cleanse the place where He is to abide. You do not understand the words: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was made nothing that has been made. In him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness grasped it not.'[14] Behold the reason why you do not understand: 'The light shines in the darkness; and the darkness grasped it not.' What constitutes darkness except evil works? What constitutes darkness except evil desires: pride, avarice, ambition, envy? All those evils constitute darkness and, on that account, you do not understand. For the 'light shines in the darkness,' but give me one who understands.

(7) Exert yourself so that you may be able to comprehend in some way or other: 'The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.'[15] Through the Man Christ you go to the God Christ. God means much to you; but God became Man. The Word which was far from you became Man in your midst. Where you are to abide, He is God; on your way thither, He is Man. Christ Himself is both the Way by which you go and the Haven toward which you make your way. Therefore, He the 'Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.' He took upon Himself what He was not; He did not lose what He was. He appeared as Man; He concealed His Godhead. He was slain as Man; He was offended as God.

13 Job 1.21.
14 John 1.1-6.
15 John 1.14.

But as Man He rose again and proved that He was God. Consider, then, how much He did as God; how much He suffered as Man. He was put to death, but not in His divinity; Christ Himself was slain. For there are not two Persons, God and Man, in such a way that we no longer consider or recognize a Trinity but rather a quaternity. Man is indeed man, and God is indeed God, but the whole Christ is both God and Man. Therefore, Christ Himself is both God and Man. Just as you, a man, are body and soul, so the whole Christ is body, soul, and God.

The same Person says something which pertains to God; He says something which pertains to His soul; He says something which pertains to His body; but the whole belongs to Christ. What does He say as God?[16] 'As the Father has life in himself, even so has he given to the Son also to have life in himself.' 'Whatever the Father does, this the Son also does in like manner.' 'I and the Father are one.' What does Christ say in reference to His soul? 'My soul is sad, even unto death.'[17] What does Christ say in regard to His body?[18] 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' 'Feel me and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.' These words are treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

(8) Certainly the whole Law depends on two precepts: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind; . . . and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.'[19] In Christ you have the Entirety. Do you wish to love your God? You possess Him in Christ: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God.' Do you wish to love your neighbor? You possess him

16 Cf. John 5.26,19; 10.30.
17 Matt. 26.38.
18 John 2.19; Luke 24.39.
19 Matt. 22.37-41.

in Christ: 'The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.'[20]

(9) May His grace cleanse us; may He purify us by His assistance and His consolations. My brethren, through Him and in Him I beseech you to abound in good works, in mercy, in kindness, and in goodness. Be quick to forgive the sins committed against you. Let no one nourish anger against another lest he obstruct his own prayer to God. For, since we are in this world, even if we perform all these worthy actions, even if we live righteously, we do not live here without sin. As a matter of fact, those offenses which are called crimes are not the only sins, namely, adulteries, fornications, sacrileges, thefts, plunder, false testimonies: these are not the only sins. To give your attention to what you should not heed is a sin; to listen gladly to something which you should not hear is a sin; to think of something upon which you should not dwell is a sin.

(10) But, after the laver of regeneration, our Lord has given us other daily remedies. The Lord's Prayer is our daily purification. Let us say, and let us say with sincerity because it is an alms in itself: 'Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.'[21] 'Give alms and all things are clean to you.'[22] Remember, my brethren, what God is going to say to those destined to stand on His right hand.[23] He will not say: 'You accomplished these and those great deeds,' but He will say: 'I was hungry and you gave me to eat.' To those destined to stand on His left hand He will not say: 'You performed these and those evil deeds,' but He will say: 'I was hungry and you did not give me to eat.' The former, by reason of their almsgiving, [will go] into life everlasting; the latter, by reason of their barrenness, into everlasting fire. Choose now either the right or the left. For, I ask you, what hope of health will there be for one who is slow in applying

20 John 1.1,14.
21 Matt. 6.12.
22 Cf. Luke 11.41.
23 Cf. Matt. 25.35,42.

remedies though he abounds in diseases? 'But the diseases are insignificant.' Heap them together, and they weigh you down. 'But the sins which I commit are rather trifling.' Are they not numerous? How are sins trifling which press upon one and bring destruction? What is more minute than drops of rain? Yet, they fill the rivers. What is more minute than grains of wheat? Yet, they fill the barns. You note the fact that they are rather small, but you do not note that they are numerous. You know how to appraise; count, if you can. However, God has certainly given us a daily remedy.

(11) Great is the mercy of Him who 'ascended on high and led captivity captive.'[24] What is the significance of 'he led captivity captive'? He overcame death. Captivity has been taken captive; death has died. What then? Did He who 'ascended on high and led captivity captive' accomplish only this? Did He then abandon us? 'Behold, I am with you even to the consummation of the world.'[25] Therefore, attend to this statement: 'He has given gifts to men.'[26] Open wide the bosom of your piety; receive the gift of eternal happiness.

Sermon 262

(1) The Lord Jesus, the only-begotten of the Father, co-eternal with Him who begot Him, equally invisible, equally unchangeable, equally omnipotent, equally God, became Man for our sake, as you have learned, as you have believed, and as you hold. Assuming human nature, He did not abandon His divine nature; hidden in His omnipotence, He was revealed in His weakness. As you know, He was born so that we might be reborn; He died so that we might not die forever. Straightway, that is, on the third day, He rose again; He promised to us a like resurrection at the end of

24 Cf. Ps. 67.19; Eph. 4.8.
25 Cf. Matt. 28.20.
26 Cf. Ps. 67.19; Eph. 4.8.

the world. He presented Himself to be seen by the eyes of the disciples, to be touched by their hands, thus proving what He had become without detracting from what He always was. He remained with them for forty days, as you have heard, coming and going, eating and drinking, no longer from any need, but entirely by His power, convincing them of the reality of His body, of its weakness on the cross, but of its immortality on issuing from the tomb.

(2) Today, therefore, we celebrate the day of His Ascension. In addition, this day marks a local solemnity for this particular church.[1] On this day the burial of holy Leontius, the founder of this basilica, took place. However, let the star deign to be obscured by the Sun, and therefore, as I had begun, let me choose to speak about the Lord. The good servant rejoices when the Master is praised.

(3) On this day, therefore, that is, on the fortieth day after His Resurrection, the Lord ascended into heaven. We did not witness His Ascension, but let us believe. Those who did witness it proclaimed it and filled the entire world [with their preaching.] You know that, concerning those who witnessed it and who told us about it, the Scripture had predicted: 'There are no speeches nor languages, where their voices are not heard. Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth: and their words unto the ends of the world.'[2] Hence, their voices have reached us and have aroused us from sleep. Behold, this day is being celebrated throughout the whole world.

(4) Recall the words of the psalm to your minds. To whom was this said: 'Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens'?[3] To whom was this said? Was 'be thou exalted' said to God the Father, who was never humiliated? No, 'be thou exalted,' Thou who hast been enclosed in the womb

1 This sermon was evidently delivered to mark the burial of Leontius, Bishop of Hippo, in the basilica named in his honor. See also Sermon 260 and Letter 29.1.
2 Ps. 18.4-6.
3 Ps. 56.12.

of Thy Mother; Thou who hast been formed in her whom Thou didst form; Thou who hast lain in a manger; Thou who, in true flesh, as a little Babe hast been nourished at the breast;[4] Thou who, carrying the world, wert carried by Thy Mother; Thou whom the old man Simeon recognized as a Little One and praised as the Mighty One; Thou whom the widow Anna saw as a nursling and acknowledged as omnipotent; Thou who wert hungry for our sake, thirsty for our sake, and wearied on the way for our sake. (Yet is Bread ever hungry, or is the Fountain ever thirsty, or is the Way ever weary?) Thou who hast endured all things for our sake; Thou who hast slept, yet slumberest not in protecting Israel; finally, Thou whom Judas sold, whom the Jews bought and yet did not possess; Thou who wert seized, bound, scourged, crowned with thorns, suspended on the cross, pierced with the lance; Thou who didst die and who wert buried, 'be thou exalted O God, above the heavens.'

(5) 'Be thou exalted,' the Psalmist says, 'be thou exalted above the heavens,' because Thou art God. Be enthroned in heaven, since Thou didst hang upon the cross. You are feared as the Judge who is to come, You who, having been feared, were once judged. Who would believe such things if they were not done by Him who raises the needy from the earth and lifts the poor from the dunghill? He Himself raises His own needy body and places it with the princes of His people, with whom He is going to judge the living and the dead. He has placed this needy body among those to whom He said: 'You shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'[5]

(6) Therefore, 'be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens.' That has already happened; it has already been fulfilled. Nevertheless, we, not understanding but believing, ask how that prediction, 'Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens,' is going to be fulfilled. Behold before our eyes

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4 The reading of Ms. Floriancensis has been followed here: *in vera carne suxisti.*

5 Matt. 19.28.

the statement which follows: 'Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth.' Let him who does not grasp the second part not believe the first part. For what is the significance of 'And thy glory above all the earth,' except that Thy Church is above all the earth, Thy lady is above all the earth, Thy spouse, Thy beloved, Thy dove, Thy bride is above all the earth? She is Thy glory as the Apostle says: 'A man ought not to cover his head, because he is the image and glory of God. But woman is the glory of man.'[6] If woman is the glory of man, the Church is the glory of Christ . . . .[7]

Sermon 263

(1) The glorification of our Lord Jesus Christ was completed by His Resurrection and Ascension. We celebrated His Resurrection on Easter Sunday; today we are celebrating His Ascension. Both feasts belong to us, for He rose again to give us a token of our resurrection; He ascended in order to protect us from heaven above. Hence, we have our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hanging on a cross, now enthroned in heaven. He paid our price when He hung upon the cross; He gathers what He purchased when He sits enthroned in heaven. As a matter of fact, when He has collected all whom He will gather together throughout all time, He will come at the end of the world just as it is written: 'God shall come manifestly,'[1] not as He came first, in obscurity, but, as the Scripture says, 'manifestly.' For it was fitting that He should come in obscurity so that He might be judged; but He shall come manifestly when He is to pass judgment. Indeed, if

6 1 Cor. 11.7.
7 In the Ms. Floriancensis this sermon has a long additional passage. However, since the content is repeated, with few exceptions, in Sermon 265, it has not been included here.

1 Ps. 49.3.

He had first come manifestly, who would have dared to judge Him thus manifested, since in truth the Apostle says: 'For had they known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.'[2] But, if He had not been put to death, death would have not died. The Devil was overcome by his own trophy, for the Devil rejoiced when, by seducing the first man, he cast him into death. By seducing the first man, he killed him; by killing the last Man, he lost the first from his snare.

Therefore, the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ was assured when He rose again and ascended into heaven; and that was fulfilled which you heard when the Apocalypse was read: 'The lion of the tribe of Juda . . . has overcome.'[3] He who was slain as a lamb has been called a Lion: a Lion because of His courage, a Lamb because of His innocence; a Lion because invincible, a Lamb because gentle. And the Lamb Himself, when slain, by His death overcame the lion who 'goes about seeking someone to devour.' For the Devil has been called a lion by reason of his ferocity, not because of his courage. Indeed, the Apostle Peter says: 'It is necessary for you to be on your guard against temptations, for your adversary the devil goes about seeking someone to devour.' Moreover, in regard to how he goes about, Peter says: 'As a roaring lion he goes about seeking someone to devour.'[4] Who would be safe from the teeth of this lion if the Lion of the tribe of Juda had not prevailed? The Lion [stood] against the lion; the Lamb against the wolf. The Devil exulted when Christ died, and by that very death of Christ the Devil was overcome: he took food, as it were, from a trap. He gloated over the death as if he were appointed a deputy of death; that in which he rejoiced became a prison for him. The cross of the Lord became a trap for the Devil; the death of the Lord was the food by which he was ensnared.

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2 1 Cor. 2.8.
3 Apoc. 5.5.
4 1 Peter 5.8.

And behold, our Lord Jesus Christ rose again. Where is the death which hung upon the cross? Where is the reviling of the Jews? Where is the pride and haughtiness of those who shook their heads before the cross saying: 'If he is the Son of God let him come down from the cross.'[5] But He did more than they demanded in their revilings, for it is greater to rise from the tomb than to come down from the cross.

(2) Even now, in truth, how great is His glory because He ascended into heaven, because He sits at the right hand of the Father! But we do not see this with our mortal eyes because we did not see Him hanging on the cross. We cherish all this by faith; we see it with the eyes of our hearts. For on this day, my brethren, as you have heard, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven; may our hearts, too, ascend with Him. Let us hearken to the Apostle when he says: 'If you have risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth.'[6] For, just as He ascended into heaven without departing from us, so we, too, are already there with Him although that which He promised us has not yet been accomplished in our body. He has already been exalted above the heavens. Nor must we despair of reaching that perfect and angelic heavenly dwelling because of the fact that He said: 'No one has ascended into heaven except him who has descended from heaven: the Son of Man who is in heaven.'[7] But this was said on account of the unity by which He is our Head and we are His Body. Although He ascended into heaven, we are not separated from Him. He who descended from heaven does not begrudge it to us; on the contrary, He proclaims it in a certain manner: 'Be My members if you wish to ascend into heaven.' By this word let us be strengthened in the meantime; by this word let us be enkindled in

5 Cf. Matt. 27.40.
6 Col. 3.1-3.
7 John 3.13.

all our prayers. On earth let us meditate on that which we look forward to in heaven. Then we shall put off the flesh of mortality; now let us put aside the sluggishness of our mind. The body will easily be lifted to the heights of heaven if the weight of our sins does not press down upon our spirit.

(3) For this, too, incites some people to slanderous heresies, namely, the question as to how the Lord descended without a body when He ascended with a body, as if this were contrary to those words which state: 'No one ascends into heaven, except him who has descended from heaven.' They ask how a body which did not descend from heaven could ascend into heaven, as if He had said: "Nothing ascends into heaven except what has descended from heaven,' instead of 'No one ascends except him who has descended.' For the statement referred to the Person, not to His external appearance. He descended without bodily vesture; He ascended with bodily vesture. Still, no one has ascended except Him who has descended. For, if He has so attached us to Himself as His members that He is one and the same with us who have been united to Him, how much more certain is it that the body which He took from the Virgin cannot have a plurality of persons in it! For, in regard to a mountain or a wall or any rather high place, who insists that one who descended has not ascended if, although he descended unclothed, he ascends clothed, or if he ascends armed although he came down unarmed? Therefore, just as one says in regard to this case: 'No one ascends except him who has descended,' even though he ascends with something with which he did not descend, so no one has ascended into heaven except Christ, because no one has descended from heaven except Christ. Although He descended without a body, He ascended with a body and with us who are destined to ascend, not by reason of our own virtue, but on account of our oneness with Him. For there are two in one flesh; this is the great mystery in Christ and in the Church.[8] Wherefore, He Himself says:

8 Cf. Eph. 5.31-33.

'Therefore now they are no longer two, but one flesh.'[9]

(4) Furthermore, the Lord, although He still needed food, fasted when He was tempted before His death; but He ate and drank when, no longer needing any food, He was glorified after His Resurrection. For, in the former instance, He manifested in His own Person our sufferings; in the latter, He revealed His own consolations in regard to us, limiting both periods to forty days. In fact, He fasted for forty days when He was tempted in the desert before the death of His body, as is written in the Gospel;[10] and again He spent forty days with the disciples, as Peter [*sic*] says in the Acts of the Apostles,[11] coming in and going out, eating and drinking, after the Resurrection of His body.

In the use of the number forty to designate this period of time, a reference seems to be made to those who are called to grace through Him who came not to destroy the Law but to fulfill it. For, there are ten precepts of the Law. Now, the grace of Christ has been diffused throughout the world and the world is divided into four parts. Furthermore, when ten is multiplied by four, since those 'that have been redeemed by the Lord He hath gathered out the countries, from the rising and from the setting of the sun, from the north and from the sea,'[12] the result is forty. Hence, He fasted for forty days before the death of His body as if to say: 'Abstain from the desires of the world,' but He ate and drank during the forty days after the Resurrection of His body as if to say: 'Behold, I am with you . . . even to the consummation of the world.'[13] Fasting is, indeed, proper in

9 Matt. 19.6.
10 Cf. Matt. 4.1-3.
11 Cf. Acts 1.3-5. The reference to Peter instead of Luke in this passage leads one to question whether St. Augustine was referring to one of the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. See O. Bardenhewer, *Patrologie* (trans. Shahan) 97-110. The Lucan authorship of the Acts was definitely established by the Biblical Commission on June 12, 1913; see Robert and Tricot, *Guide to the Bible* I 221-223.
12 Cf. Ps. 106.2-4.
13 Matt. 28.20.

the trial of the contest, since he who strives in a contest abstains from all things;[14] but food is proper in the hope of peace which will not be achieved until our body, whose redemption we hope for, will have put on immortality. However, we now feast by anticipation upon that in which we do not yet take glory by actual possession. St. Paul predicted our doing both these things at the same time when he said: 'Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation,'[15] as if the former were contingent on food; the latter, on fasting. In fact, when we enter upon the way of the Lord, let us fast from the vanity of this present life, and refresh ourselves with the hope of the future life, not focusing our heart on things here, but feasting it on things above.

Sermon 264

(1) There are many mysteries hidden in the sacred Scriptures, some of which I myself consider as calling for investigation and others which the Lord has deigned to reveal to our lowliness, but there is not enough time now to disclose these mysteries to your Holiness. For I know that on these days, especially, the church is filled with people who prefer to depart quickly more than to come and who consider me boring if I speak somewhat at length. Nevertheless, if these same people are detained until evening at those banquets to which they are hastening, they neither suffer, nor refuse, nor depart without at least some embarrassment. Still, not to deprive those who came here desirous of nourishment, I shall speak, though briefly, about the mystery of the fact that our Lord ascended with that body in which He rose again.

(2) Indeed, it was on account of the weakness of His disciples—for, even in that number, there were those whom

14 Cf. 1 Cor. 9.25.
15 Cf. Rom. 12.12.

the Devil tempted by unbelief to such an extent that a certain disciple did not have as much faith in the Lord's living members, in that personal appearance with which he was familiar as in His recent wounds[1]—therefore, to strengthen their faith the Lord deigned, after His Resurrection, to live with them for forty whole days, from the very day of His Passion even to this day, coming in and going out, eating and drinking, just as the Scripture states,[2] proving that the physical life of which He had been deprived by the crucifixion was restored to their vision after the Resurrection.

Nevertheless, He did not wish them to cleave to His flesh nor to detain Him too long by their earthly affection. For, with the same attitude of mind as Peter had shown when he did not wish the Lord to suffer, the disciples wished Him to be always physically present with them. For they looked upon Him as a Teacher, as a Comforter, as a Consoler and a Protector, in a word, as a man such as they themselves were. If they did not see anything of this sort, they believed that He was not there even though He was always present in His majesty.

Moreover, He actually looked upon them, as He Himself deigned to say, just as a hen does upon her chickens.[3] In fact, as a hen herself becomes weak because of the weakness of her young—for, if you recall, of all the birds which bring forth their young before our eyes, we do not know of any bird except the hen which becomes weak with her young—so, from her the Lord drew a similitude because, on account of our weakness, He also deigned to become weak by the assumption of a human body. Now, however, it was fitting for them to be lifted up a little, for them to think of Him in a spiritual fashion as the Word of God, as God with God, as the One through whom all things were made; but the flesh which they saw did not permit them to do all this. Hence, it was advantageous for them to be strengthened in

1 Cf. John 20.25.
2 Cf. Acts 1.3-5.
3 Cf. Matt. 23.37.

faith by His association with them during these forty days; but it was more advantageous for Him to withdraw Himself from their eyes, for Him who had associated with them on earth as a brother, to assist them from heaven as their Lord, and for them to learn to look upon Him as God. As a matter of fact, the Evangelist John stated this,[4] if anyone happens to note and if anyone happens to understand. For the Lord says: 'Let not your heart be troubled. . . . If you loved me, you would indeed rejoice that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.' And in another place He says: 'I and the Father are one.' He appropriates to Himself such equality, not by theft, but by nature so that to one of the disciples who said to Him: 'Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us,' He answered: 'Philip, have I been so long a time with you and you have not known the Father? He who sees me sees also the Father.' What is the significance of 'who sees me'? If it refers to the eyes of the flesh, they who crucified Him saw. What, then, is the real meaning of 'who sees me' unless it be 'who understands, who sees with the eyes of the mind'? For, just as there are interior ears which the Lord sought when He said: 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear,'[5] although there was no deaf person standing before Him, so there is an interior sight of the mind by which, if anyone has seen the Lord, he has seen the Father, also, because He is equal to the Father.

(3) Hear the Apostle when he endeavors to commend to us the mercy of Him who for our sake became weak so that He might gather His chickens under His wings, instructing other disciples who, from lack of strength had arisen to a certain strength, so that they too might compassionate the weakness of their weaker brethren since He had come down to our weakness from heavenly strength. The Apostle says: 'Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus.'[6] 'Consider

4 John 14.1,28; 10.30; 14.8-10.
5 Matt. 11.15.
6 Phil. 2.5-8.

it an honor,' he says, 'to imitate the Son of God in compassion for His little ones. "Who though he was by nature God . . . ." ' By saying 'though he was by nature God,' he declares that Christ is equal to God, for one's nature is not less than he whose nature it is. In fact, if it is less, it is not one's nature. Nevertheless, lest anyone should doubt, he made an addition and he placed the Word itself there to close the mouth of the sacrilegious: 'Who though he was by nature God, did not consider it theft to be equal to God.' My dear brethren, what is the meaning of the Apostle's words: 'He did not consider it theft'? Because He was by nature equal. For whom, then, was equality to God a theft? For the first man to whom was said: 'Taste and you will be as gods.'[7] He wished, by theft, to raise himself to equality and, by his punishment, he lost immortality. But he, for whom it was not theft, 'did not consider it theft to be equal to God.' If, then, it was not theft, it was nature, unbroken union, and very close relationship.

But what did the Lord do? 'He emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave and being made like unto men. And appearing in the form of man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross.'[8] It was not enough to mention death; he specified the kind of death. Why the kind of death? Because many are ready to die; many say: 'I am not afraid to die, but I would like to die in my bed, surrounded by my children, my grandchildren, and my grief-stricken wife.' Such people, indeed, do not seem to refuse death, but by choosing a particular kind of death they are punished by fear. However, He chose that kind of death which is worse than all others. Just as men choose for themselves a better kind of death, so He chose a worse kind, that which was accursed in the eyes of all Jews. For He who will come to judge the living and the dead was not afraid to die through false witness, through the sentence of

7 Cf. Gen. 3.5.
8 Phil. 2.7-9.

a judge; He was not afraid to die by the ignominy of the cross so that He might free from all disgrace those who believe in Him. Therefore, He became 'obedient to death, even to death on a cross,' though He was by nature equal to God; strong in the strength of His majesty, weak in the compassion of His humanity; strong enough to make all things, weak enough to remake all things.

(4) Give your attention, therefore, to what John says: 'If you loved me, you would indeed rejoice that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.'[9] How, then, is He equal, as the Apostle says, and as the Lord Himself says: 'I and the Father are one,' and in another passage: 'He who sees me sees also the Father'?[10] How is this true: 'The Father is greater than I'? That expression, brethren, in so far as the Lord is striving to direct the attention of the disciples, was both reproach and consolation, for their thoughts were concentrated on His human nature, and they were unable to consider Him as God. In fact, they would then think of Him as God when His human nature would be removed from their eyes, so that, with the intimacy which they had formed with His human nature thus severed, they might learn to consider His divinity in the absence of His humanity. Hence, He says to them: 'If you loved me, you would indeed rejoice that I am going to the Father.' Why? So that, when I go to the Father, you may think of me as equal to the Father. For on this account 'He is greater than I': as long as you see Me in the flesh, for just so long is the Father greater than I.

See if you have grasped this point, for the disciples did not know how to think of Him except as man. I am saying this somewhat more explicitly for the sake of our slower brethren. Moreover, let those who have grasped it put up with the slowness of the others and imitate the Lord Himself who 'though he was by nature God, . . . humbled himself,

9 John 14.28.
10 Cf. Phil. 2.6; John 10.30, 14.9.

becoming obedient to death.[11] What is the meaning of the clause, 'if you loved me,' in the passage 'If you loved me, you would indeed rejoice that I am going to the Father'? What does 'if you loved me' signify other than 'you do not love me'? What, then, do you love? The human nature which you see, for you do not wish it to be removed from your vision. Moreover, what does the 'me' signify in 'if you loved me'? 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God,' as John himself says.[12] If, therefore, you would so love me because all things were made through me, 'you would rejoice that I am going to the Father.' Why? 'For the Father is greater than I. As long as you see Me on earth, the Father is greater than I. Let Me depart from your eyes; let this mortal flesh which was assumed for the sake of your mortality be taken away from your vision; let this vesture which I took upon Myself in humility begin to withdraw from your eyes; and let it, instead be lifted up to heaven so that you may learn what to hope for.' In fact, He did not leave here the vesture with which He wished to be clothed while here on earth because, if He had done so, all would despair of the resurrection of their own bodies.

Now He has actually raised this body to heaven and there are persons who doubt about the resurrection of the body! If God has demonstrated this in His own case, is He going to refuse it to man? For, God took a body through compassion; man, through necessity. Nevertheless, God manifested His body; He confirmed His followers in their faith when He raised it up to heaven. Moreover, when His physical presence was removed from their eyes, they no longer looked upon Him as mere man. Whatever there was of earthly affection in their hearts for Him produced sadness in them; still, they gathered together in one place and began to pray. Moreover, He intended to send the Holy Spirit after an

11 Phil. 2.6,8.
12 John 1.1.

interval of ten days so that, taking away from them their earthly desires, the Holy Spirit might fill them with spiritual love. Thus He now caused them to understand how Christ was the Word of God, God with God, through whom all things were made. Besides, they could not have been filled with such understanding if earthly love had not departed from their eyes.

Hence, the Lord said: 'If you loved me, you would indeed rejoice that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.' He is greater than I considered as Man; He is equal to Me considered as God; equal in regard to nature, greater in regard to the mercy of the Son. For He lowered Him, not only beneath His own rank, but even below the angels, as the Scripture says.[13] But the Son is not less, even if you perceive that He, by the assumption of a human body, has withdrawn somewhat from equality with the Father, whence He never really departs. Moreover, by taking flesh (for He did assume a human form), He was not changed. In the same way, one who puts on a garment is not changed into that garment, but within it he remains himself, an unchanged man. So, too, if a senator puts clothing of a slave when, perchance, clothed in his senatorial robes, he cannot enter a prison to console someone who is detained there—if he puts on prison garb, he seems to be wretchedly clothed as far as his physical being is concerned, but interiorly his senatorial dignity remains unimpaired to just such a degree as the mercy was greater by which he was prompted to put on what was of lowly nature. Thus, too, did the Lord, remaining God, remaining the Word, remaining Wisdom, remaining Divine Power, remaining supreme in the administration of the world, yet filling the angels, whole and entire everywhere, in the world, in the patriarchs, in the Prophets, in all the saints, in the womb of the Virgin, [demean Himself] in order to assume human nature, to unite it to Himself as a spouse so that as a Bridegroom He might come forth from the bride-

13 Cf. Ps. 8.6.

chamber and so that He might espouse the Church, a chaste virgin. In this respect, therefore, He was less than the Father because He was Man; but equal to the Father because He was God.

Therefore, cast out earthly longing [for Him] from your hearts. He would speak to His Apostles somewhat after this fashion: 'You do not wish Me to depart, just as one does not wish his friend to go away and, as it were, says to him: "Stay with us for a little while; our spirits are refreshed when we see you." But it is better for you not to see this body and to think of My divinity. I am removing Myself from you exteriorly, but I am filling you with Myself interiorly.' For, Christ does not enter your heart physically, with His body, does He? On the contrary, He takes possession of the heart in a spiritual sense. Through the eyes, in a physical sense, He speaks to the heart and He admonishes from without; but He dwells within us so that we may be interiorly converted, so that we may be quickened by Him and formed after His pattern, for He is the uncreated form of all created things.

(5) Hence, if He passed forty days with His disciples, He did not make it forty days without reason. Perhaps twenty days would have sufficed, perhaps thirty days would have been enough; nevertheless, forty days is His dispensation for this whole period. In another sermon I discussed the fact that forty is the number ten multiplied by four; I recall that sermon to those of you who were present. As a matter of fact, the number ten symbolizes all wisdom. This wisdom has been dispensed throughout the four parts of the world, throughout the entire universe. Even the seasons are marked off by a fourfold arrangement, for the year has four seasons just as the world has four directions. Hence, ten taken four times produces the number forty.

Moreover, for the above reason, the Lord fasted for forty days,[14] showing us that the faithful ought to abstain from all corruption as long as they are in this world. Elias, in the

14 Cf. Matt. 4.2.

capacity of Prophet, fasted for forty days, indicating that this is taught by the Prophets, too.[15] Moses, symbolizing the Law, fasted for forty days, showing that this is also taught in the Law.[16] For forty years the people of Israel were led through the desert.[17] For forty days the ark was tossed about in the flood, that ark which, fashioned from incorruptible material typifying the souls of the saints and of the just, represents the Church; that ark which sheltered both clean and unclean animals, because, as long as life continues in this world and as long as the Church is cleansed by baptism as by a flood, it cannot fail to include both good and bad, and which for that reason contained both clean and unclean animals. However, when Noe came forth from the ark, he offered sacrifice to God of clean animals only.[18] From this fact we ought to realize that there are clean and unclean in the ark of the Church, but that, after the flood [that is, after baptism], God accepts only those who have purified themselves.

Therefore, look upon this whole period of time which is presented to us as forty days, my brethren. As long as we are here on earth, during this entire period, our ark is in the flood. As long as Christians are baptized and cleansed through water, the ark seems to float upon the waves just as Noe's ark rested upon the water for forty days. But the Lord, remaining with His disciples for forty days, deigned to indicate that throughout this period faith in the Incarnation of Christ is necessary for all, since it is necessary for the weak. Now, if we possessed the vision to perceive that 'in the beginning was the Word,' to perceive, to hold fast, to embrace, to delight in [this truth], it would not have been necessary for the Word to become flesh and to dwell among us.[19] But, by the dust of sins, the interior vision had been

15 Cf. 3 Kings 19.8.
16 Cf. Exod. 34.28.
17 Cf. Num. 32.13.
18 Cf. Gen. 6-9.
19 Cf. John 1.1,14.

blinded so far as grasping and enjoying that truth was concerned, and men no longer possessed the capacity of understanding the Word. Hence, He deigned to become flesh in order that what cannot be grasped now might be presented so as to be perceived later on.

Thus, the manifestation of the human nature of Christ is necessary for the faithful in this life so that they make their way toward the Lord. However, once they have come to the vision of the Word, an entirely human manifestation will not be necessary. On that account, His association in the flesh for forty days after the Resurrection was necessary to show that faith in the Incarnation of Christ was indispensable for as long a time as the ark is said to have been tossed upon the flood in this life. Hearken to what I am saying, brethren. Believe in Jesus Christ who was born of the Virgin Mary and who, having been crucified, rose again. There is no need of our questioning anything after that point, because we have already accepted it in faith; let us hold fast to this; it is necessary for our weakness. Consider, therefore, the charity of Him who, as a hen, protects our weakness; consider that charity as the beast of burden belonging to the merciful traveler who placed upon it the poor man who had been wounded.[20] For, he lifted up the wounded man; and where did he place him? Upon his own beast of burden. The flesh of the Lord is our beast of burden. Hence, when this world will have passed, what will be said to you? 'Because you have rightly believed in the humanity of Christ, now enjoy the majesty and divinity of Christ.' Weak human nature was necessary for weak human nature; strength will be necessary for the strong.

(6) You also have to lay aside that weak human nature, just as you heard in the Epistle of the Apostle: 'This corruptible body must put on incorruption, and this mortal body must put on immortality,' because, as he says: 'flesh and

20 Cf. Luke 10.30-35.

blood can obtain no part in the kingdom of God.'[21] Why will they obtain no part? It it because the flesh will not rise again? Far be it! The flesh will rise again, but what will it become? It is changed; it becomes a heavenly and angelic body. Do angels have a corporeal body? But there is this difference—because that body will rise again, that same body which is buried, which dies; that same body which is seen and felt; that body which needs to eat and drink in order to live; that body which becomes sick and suffers pain; that same body has to rise again, unto everlasting punishment in the case of the wicked, and to undergo a change in the case of the good. When this change has been made, what will it become? Now it will be called, not a mortal, but a heavenly body, because 'this corruptible body must put on incorruption, and this mortal body must put on immortality.'

However, people are amazed that God, who made all things from nothing, makes a heavenly body from human flesh. When He was in the flesh, the Lord made wine from water; is it anything wonderful if He makes a heavenly body from human flesh? Do not admit any doubt about God because He is able to do this. There was nothing [upon which to draw] so that angels might exist; but by His power alone they are what they are. Is He who was able to make you when you did not exist not able to make over what you once were? And is He not able to give a greater degree of glory to your faith on account of His own Incarnation? Therefore, when this world will have passed, that reward will be ours of which John says: 'Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when he appears, we shall be like to him, for we shall see him just as he is.'[22] Meanwhile, prepare yourselves for that vision; as long as you are in the flesh, believe in Christ incarnate; believe in such a way as to

21 1 Cor. 15.53,50.
22 1 John 3.2.

preclude any thought that you have been deceived by any falsehood. For Truth never lies. In fact, if Truth deceives, where are we to go for counsel? What are we to do? Whom are we to trust? Hence, Truth, the true Word, the true Wisdom, the true Power of God, 'the Word became flesh,' true flesh. He Himself says: 'Feel me and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.'[23]

As a matter of fact, His bones were real bones; His sinews were real sinews; His wounds were real wounds. Whatever was touched was real; whatever was perceived was true. Man was touched; God was perceived. Flesh was touched; Wisdom was perceived. Weakness was touched; Power was perceived. He is all Truth. Nevertheless, His humanity, that is, the Head [of the Mystical Body], has gone before us into heaven; the other members will follow. Why? Because it is fitting for those other members to enjoy rest here for a little while, and for each one to arise in his own time. If the Lord, too, should wish to rise at that later time, there would be no one in whom we would believe. For that reason, He wished, in His own Person, to offer to God the first fruits of those sleeping,[24] in order that, on seeing what has been restored to Him, you might hope for the same reward in your own case. All the people of God will be equal to and associated with the angels. Therefore, let no one say to you, my brethren, 'Those stupid Christians believe that the flesh will rise again. Who rises, or who has risen? Who has come back from the lower regions and has spoken to you?' Christ has come back, O wretched one, O perverse and unreasonable human heart! If his grandfather should rise again, this man would believe him; the Lord of the world has risen, but he is unwilling to believe.

(7) Consequently, my brethren, hold fast to the true, genuine, and Catholic faith. The Son is equal to the Father;

23 Luke 24.39.

24 The reading *libare,* suggested in Migne, *PL* 38.1218, note 2, has been adopted here.

the Gift of God, the Holy Spirit, is equal to the Father; and therefore, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit constitute one God, not three gods; they have not been added by successive stages to one another, but are united together in majesty; they are one God. However, for our sake, the Son, 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' 'He did not consider it theft to be equal to God, but emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave, and appearing in the form of man.'[25] And, so that you may know, my brethren, that the Trinity is truly an equality, and that the statement, 'The Father is greater than I,' was made only in reference to the human nature which the Lord assumed, why was the same statement, 'He is less,' never made in regard to the Holy Spirit unless it be because He did not assume a human nature? Consider what I have said; scrutinize all the Scriptures; take all the pages in your hand; read all the verses; and you will never find that the Holy Spirit is less than God. Therefore, the Son was said to be less because He became less for our sake, so that through Him we might be made greater.

Sermon 265

(1) On the solemnity of this feast I admonish those who are mindful, and I instruct those who are careless. Today we solemnly celebrate the Ascension of the Lord into heaven. For the Lord our Saviour who departed from His body and later assumed it again, after He rose from the dead, manifested Himself alive to His disciples who had lost hope in Him as one dead. After that, He presented Himself to be viewed by their eyes and touched by their hands, building up their faith by disclosing the truth. Since it would be too great a tax on human frailty and insecure anxiety to reveal so great a miracle and to withdraw it again within one day, He remained with them on earth, as we heard when the

25 Cf. Phil. 2.6-8.

book of the Acts of the Apostles was read; He associated with them on earth for forty days, coming in and going out, eating and drinking, not because He needed to do so, but in order to manifest the truth. Therefore, on the fortieth day which we celebrate today, while they looked on and followed Him with their eyes, He ascended into heaven.

Then, therefore, they afterwards marveled at the fact that they saw Him ascending and they rejoiced that He went up to heaven, for the precedence of the Head is the hope of the members. Moreover, they heard the angelic message: 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to heaven? This Jesus . . . shall come in the same way as you have seen him going up to heaven.'[1] What is the significance of 'He will come in the same way'? He will come in that same form, so that the Scripture may be fulfilled: 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced.'[2] 'He shall come in the same way.' He shall come to men; He shall come as a Man; but He shall come as the God-Man. He shall come as true God and true Man to make men like unto God. He has ascended as Judge of heaven; He has expressed Himself as Herald of heaven. Let us have a good cause so that we may not fear the judgment that is to come. As a matter of fact, He did ascend; those who announced it to us witnessed it. The people who did not see it believed; some incredulous persons mocked, 'for not all men have the faith.'[3] Furthermore, because 'not all men have the faith' and because 'the Lord knows who are his,'[4] why do we take exception to the fact that God ascended into heaven? Rather, let us wonder that God descended into hell. Let us wonder at the death of Christ; but let us praise rather than wonder at His Resurrection. Ours is the loss; ours is the sin; but the blood of Christ is our redemption. The Resurrection of Christ is our

1 Acts 1.11.
2 John 19.37; Zach. 12.10.
3 2 Thess. 3.2.
4 2 Tim. 2.19.

hope; the coming of Christ is our possession. Therefore, we must wait until He comes who now sits at the right hand of the Father. Let our soul, thirsting for Him, say: 'When will He come?' and 'My soul hath thirsted after the living God.'[5] When will He come? He will come, but when will He come? You long for Him to come. Would that He may find you ready!

(2) However, let us not think that we are the only ones to have such a longing for our Lord that we keep saying: 'When will He come?' His disciples had this same longing. If I were able to give this information to you, as you longingly gaze upward, looking with expectancy and suspense, desiring to find out when the Lord our God is going to come, if I were able to impart this information to you, what would I seem like in your eyes? But if you do not hope to be able to hear this answer from me (and if you do hope, you are foolish people), certainly, if you should have the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, present in His body, alive and speaking, before your eyes and your hands, I know well that, in view of your longing, you would ask and say to Him: 'Lord, when are You going to come?' The disciples themselves, when the Lord was actually present, asked Him that question. You cannot ask as they asked, but listen to the answer they received. For they were then in existence, but we were not yet living. However, if we believe them, they asked for us and they heard the answer for us. Therefore, the disciples of Christ, who was about to be taken from their sight, questioned Christ as He was on the point of ascending to heaven and said to Him: 'Lord, will you be presented at this time?'[6] To whom were they speaking? Whom did they see present? 'Will you be presented at this time?' What does that mean? Did they not see Him present? Did they not hear Him present? Did they not even touch Him present? What, then, does this mean: 'Will you be presented at this

5 Cf. Ps. 41.3.
6 Cf. Acts 1.6.

time?' unless it be that they knew that the future judgment would take place in the presence of Christ so that He would be seen by His followers and by others. For, when He rose again, He was seen only by His followers.

Therefore, the disciples knew this and they clung to the belief that the time would come when He who was judged here would Himself judge, when He who was accused here would Himself accuse and blame, when He who was viewed by both classes of men would Himself place some on His right hand and others on His left; and that He would say what both groups would hear, that He would offer what only one group would not receive, and that He would threaten what only one group would fear. They realized that this would take place; but they asked when it would be. 'Will you be presented at this time? [We ask this] not as for ourselves, for we now see You, but will You be presented also to those who have not believed in You? Tell us whether You will be presented at this time and tell us when the kingdom of Israel will come.' What kingdom? The one in regard to which we say: 'Thy kingdom come.'[7] What kingdom? The one in regard to which those placed on the right side are going to hear: 'Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' At the same time God will say to those on His left: 'Depart . . . into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.'[8] It is a dreadful sentence; a fearful sentence! The just, however, 'shall be in everlasting remembrance: he shall not fear the evil hearing.'[9] For the one group, this reward; for the others, that punishment. He is truthful toward each because He is just toward each.

(3) Moreover, if they heard the answer to their question, let us hear, too; if they did not hearken, then, let us hold fast to what they heard. Let us not fear what is to come. 'Lord, will you be presented at this time?' Let us, believing

7 Matt. 6.10.
8 Matt. 25.34,41.
9 Ps. 111.7.

that we see the Lord present here in His Mystical Body, say to Him: 'Lord, will you be presented at this time, and when will the kingdom of Israel come?' When will the reign of Your followers come? When will the reign of the lowly come? How long will the arrogance of the proud continue? Certainly, this is what you sought; this is what you desired to hear. Let us see what He will answer; let not lambs refuse to hear what rams have listened to. Let us hear what the Lord Himself said. To whom? To Peter, John, Andrew, James, to others like them, as great and as worthy but yet men whom the Lord found unworthy and whom He made worthy. What did He say to them when they asked Him: 'Lord, will you be presented at this time, and when will the kingdom of Israel come?' He answered: 'It is not for you to know the times which the Father has fixed by his own authority.'[10] What does this mean? Is Peter told: 'It is not for you' [to know], and do you imply: 'It is for me' [to know]? 'It is not for you to know the times which the Father has fixed by his own authority.' What you believe you believe rightly, namely, that it will come. But, what difference does it make to you when it is going to come? Prepare yourself for it whenever it will come. 'It is not for you to know the times which the Father has fixed by his own authority.' Let curiosity depart; let devotion take its place. What difference does it make to you when it will come? So live as if it were to come today and you will not be afraid when it does come.

(4) Nevertheless, see the order and the training of the good Teacher, the outstanding Teacher, the only Teacher. He did not tell what they asked; He told what they did not ask. For He knew that it was not expedient for them to know what they asked; but He told them, even without their asking, what He knew was expedient for them to know. He said: 'It is not for you to know the times.' How are the times significant for you? Time is given to you for the sole purpose of going forth from time, and yet you seek time. 'It is

10 Cf. Acts 1.6,7.

not for you to know the times which the Father has fixed by his own authority.' Then, it is as if He were asked: 'And what is there for us to know?' Let us now hear what is especially pertinent for us; let us now hearken. That was asked which is not necessary for us to know; but that was answered which we ought to hear. 'It is not for you to know the times which the Father has fixed by his own authority.' What, then, is fitting for you to know?

(5) 'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me.' Where? 'In Jerusalem.' It was fitting for us to hear this, for in accordance with these words the Church is foretold and the Church is commended; unity is announced and division is censured. The statement was made to the Apostles: 'And you shall be witnesses for me.' To the faithful this is said; to the temples of God this is said; to the vessels of mercy this is said. 'You shall be witnesses for me.' Where? 'In Jerusalem' where I was put to death and in 'all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth.'[11] Behold your answer: hearken to it. Behold your answer: hold fast to it. Be as a spouse, and in security await the Bridegroom.

The Church is a spouse. Where was it predicted that she, whom the Apostles were to announce, would be? Where was it foretold that she would be? For many persons are going to say: 'Behold she is here.' I would hearken if someone else did not say: 'Behold, she is here.' Why do you say: 'Behold, she is here'? I was about to enter when someone called in similar fashion: 'Behold she is here.' You, on your part say: 'Behold, she is here'; another on his part says: 'Behold, she is here.' Let us ask the Lord; let us question the Lord. Let the parts be silent; let us hear the Whole. One person from one corner says: 'Behold, she is here'; another from another corner says: 'No, behold she is here.' Speak to us, Lord. Declare which You have redeemed; indicate which You have loved. We have been invited to Your wed-

11 Acts 1.8.

ding; show us Your spouse so that we may not disturb Your solemn pledges with our contention.

He answers without obscurity and He indicates without obscurity; He does not abandon those who seek information and He does not like those who are contentious. He speaks to His disciples, and He answers a question which they did not ask, because He is opposed to those who instigate quarrels. Perhaps this question was not yet asked by the Apostles because the flock of Christ was not yet torn asunder by robbers. Let us, who have experienced the sufferings of division, earnestly seek the means of securing unity. The Apostles ask about the time of the judgment and the Lord discloses the extent of the Church. He did not answer what they asked, but He did foresee our sufferings. 'You shall be,' He said, 'witnesses for me in Jerusalem.' That is not enough. It was not for this, not to purchase this region alone, that You paid so great a price. 'In Jerusalem.' Add: 'and even to the very ends of the earth.' You have come to the ends of the earth; why do You not end these contentions? Let no one now say to me: 'Behold she is here,' or 'No, behold she is here.' Let human presumption be silent; let divine revelation be heard; let the true promise be held fast: 'In Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth.' And when He had said this, a 'cloud took him out of their sight.'[12] No longer was there need for anything to be added or to be considered from any other sources.

(6) My brethren, are the last words of a parent who is soon to be taken to his tomb usually to be heard with great respect and are the last words of the Lord ascending to heaven going to be treated with scorn? Let us consider that our Lord wrote His will and set down in that will His last words. For He foresaw the future contentions of wicked children; He foresaw men striving to make themselves sharers of another's goods. Why should they not share what they did not purchase? Why should they not destroy that for which they paid no price? But the Lord did not wish that tunic

12 Cf. Acts 1.9.

which 'was without seam, woven in one piece from the top,'[13] to be divided; it was gained by lot. In that garment, unity has been commended to us; in that garment, charity has been preached; it was woven together from the top. Greed comes from the earth; charity, from above. Come now, my brethren. The Lord has written His will; He has set down His last words. Consider them, I beg you, and let them move you even as they move me; let them move you, if that can be done.

(7) There are two glorifications of the Lord according to His human nature: one, because He rose from the dead on the third day; the other, because He ascended into heaven before the eyes of His disciples. Those two glorifications, which are commended to us, have already taken place. There remains a third which will also take place in the sight of men when He will come to judge. The Evangelist John made this statement about the Holy Spirit: 'For the Spirit had not yet been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.'[14] 'The Spirit had not yet been given.' Why had it not yet been given? 'Since Jesus had not yet been glorified.' It was expected, therefore, that the Spirit would be given when Jesus was glorified. Rightly was He glorified twice, by His Resurrection and by His Ascension; twice, too, did He give the Holy Spirit. He gave one Spirit, and He alone gave; He gave unto unity and yet He gave twice. In the first place, after He rose again He said to His disciples: 'Receive the Holy Spirit,'[15] and He breathed upon them. There you have one instance. Later, promising to send the Holy Spirit, He said: 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.'[16] Furthermore, in another place He says: 'Wait here in the city, for I shall fulfill the promise of my Father which you have heard from my mouth.'[17] When ten days had

13 John 19.23.
14 John 7.39.
15 John 20.22.
16 Acts 1.8.
17 Cf. Luke 24.49.

elapsed after His Ascension, He sent the Holy Spirit. That is the solemnity of Pentecost which is near at hand.

(8) Attend to this, my brethren: someone may ask me: 'Why did the Lord give the Holy Spirit twice?' Many men have said many things and, as men, they have asked questions. Within the bounds of faith they have had their discussions, one saying one thing, another stating something else, but both keeping within the rule of truth. If I should say that I know why the Lord gave the Holy Spirit twice, I would be lying to you. I do not know why He did this. He who says that he knows what he does not know is rash; he who denies that he knows what he knows is ungrateful. Therefore, I confess to you that I am still seeking the reason why the Lord gave the Holy Spirit twice; I desire to arrive at a more definite conclusion. May the Lord help me because of the instancy of your prayers and, because He deigns to grant favors, may He not be silent in your regard. Hence, I do not know the answer. Nevertheless, although I do not yet know what to think and although I do not yet hold any definite view as to your question, still I hold it as certain that He did give the Holy Spirit twice. Therefore I shall not be silent as to why I hold to this. If my view is correct, may the Lord confirm it; if there is another theory which seems closer to the truth, may the Lord grant me that knowledge.

Hence, I think (but this is merely my own view) that the Holy Spirit was given twice for the purpose of commending to us the two precepts of charity. For, though there are two precepts, there is only one love in: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind,' and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.'[18] One love and two precepts;

18 Cf. Matt. 22.37-41.

one Spirit and two bestowals of the Spirit. For, one Spirit was not given on the first occasion and another Spirit on the second, just as it is not one charity which loves the neighbor and another which loves God. Hence, there is not another charity: we love God with that same charity with which we love our neighbor. In spite of the fact that God as one object of love and the neighbor as another are loved with one love, those who are loved do not constitute only one object of love. The love of God, therefore, must be granted the first place in our esteem; the love of neighbor, the second place. Yet, we must begin with the second love in order to arrive at the first, 'for if you do not love your brother whom you see, how can you love God whom you do not see?'[19]

Therefore, giving us definite instructions as to the love of neighbor, He, very patently a neighbor to His neighbors while He was on earth, gave the Holy Spirit by breathing upon their faces. Furthermore, with that special charity which is in heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit from heaven. Receive the Holy Spirit on earth—you love your brother; receive the Holy Spirit from heaven—you love God also, because what you have received on earth is from heaven. Christ gave [the Spirit] on earth, but what He gave is from heaven, for He who came down from heaven gave it. Here He found people on whom to bestow the Spirit, but He brought from heaven what He bestowed.

(9) What is the significance of this discussion, my brethren? Do I perhaps mention it because charity pertains to the Holy Spirit? Hear what Paul says: 'And not only this, but we exult in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation works out endurance, and endurance tried virtue, and tried virtue hope. And hope does not disappoint, because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts.'[20] Whence is

19 Cf. 1 John 4.20.
20 Rom. 5.3-6.

the charity of God poured forth in our hearts? Whence? What have you given to yourself? What, as it were, have you acquired from yourself? 'What hast thou that thou hast not received?'[21] Whence, then, did you receive except in the way indicated by the following words: 'by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us'?[22]

Charity is possessed only in the unity of the Church. Contentious persons do not possess it, as the Apostle Jude says: 'These are they who set themselves apart, sensual men, not having the Spirit.'[23] 'Who set themselves apart.' Why do they set themselves apart? Because they are 'sensual men, not having the Spirit.' They slide away because they do not have the stabilizing force of charity. The hen, who becomes weak for the sake of her young, is full of this charity, lowering her voice with her little ones and extending her wings over them. The Lord said: 'How often would I have gathered thy children together!'[24] He says 'gathered' not 'separated,' and He gives His reason: 'And other sheep I have that are not of this fold. Them also must I bring . . . so that there may be one fold and one shepherd.'[25] Rightly, then, He did not hearken to the man who, in disagreement with his brother, said: 'Master, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.'[26] He said: 'Master, tell my brother.' What? 'To divide the inheritance with me.' And the Lord said: 'Speak, man.' For why do you wish to divide except because you are human? 'For whenever one says, "I am of Paul," but another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere man?'[27] 'Tell me, man, who has appointed me a judge of the inherit-

21 1 Cor. 4.7.
22 Rom. 5.6.
23 Jude 1.19.
24 Matt. 23.37.
25 Cf. John 10.16.
26 Luke 12.13.
27 1 Cor. 3.4.

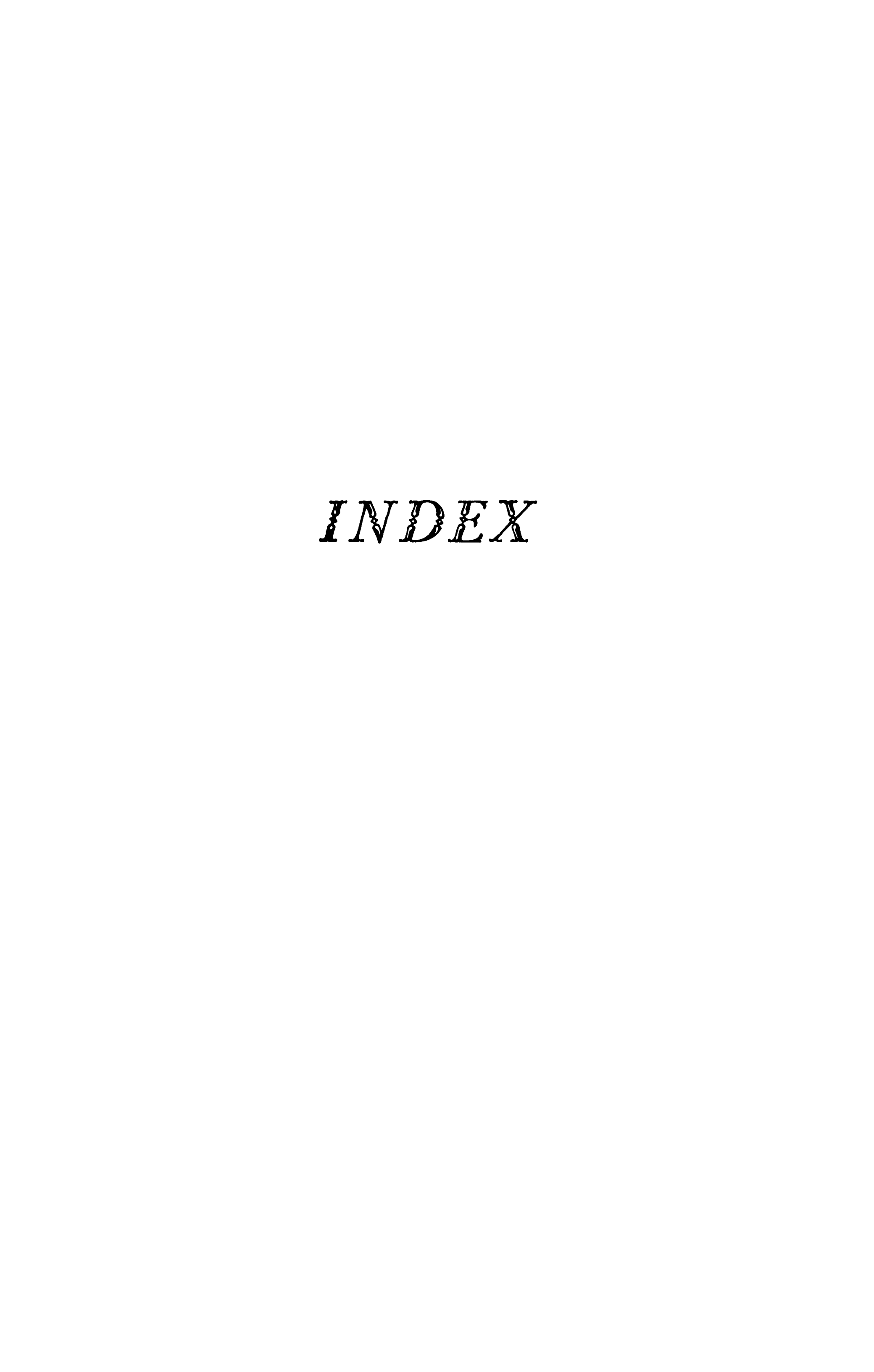
ance among you? I have come to gather, not to scatter.' Therefore He said: 'I say to you, guard against all covetousness.' For covetousness desires to divide, just as charity desires to gather together. What is the significance of 'guard against all covetousness,' unless it be 'fill yourselves with charity'? We, possessing charity for our portion, importune the Lord in regard to our brother just as that man did against his brother; but we do not use the same plea. He said: 'Master, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.'[28] We say: 'Master, tell my brother that he may have my inheritance.'

(10) See, then, my brethren, what you are to love especially and what you are to hold to tenaciously. The Lord, glorified in His Resurrection, commends the Church; about to be glorified in His Ascension, He commends the Church; sending the Holy Spirit from heaven, He commends the Church. For, when He rose again, what did He say to His disciples? ' "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled that are written in the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me." Then he opened their minds, that they might understand the Scriptures. And he said to them,[29] "Thus it is written; and thus the Christ should suffer, and should rise again from the dead on the third day." ' Where is the commendation of the Church? 'And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.' And where? 'To all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.' He was glorified by His Resurrection. Why does He deserve to be glorified by His Ascension? Because you have heard: 'You shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth.'[30] Why is

28 Cf. Luke 12.13-15.
29 Cf. Luke 24.44-47.
30 Acts 1.8.

He glorified by the coming of the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit came: those, whom He filled first, spoke with the tongues of all nations. What else did this incident where each man spoke all languages signify except unity in all speech? Holding fast to this, confirmed in this, strengthened in this, implanted, as it were, in this by indestructible charity, let us as children praise the Lord and let us sing 'Alleluia.' But in one group? And whence? And whither? 'From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, praise the name of the Lord.'[31]

31 Cf. Ps. 112.3.



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